

OMEGA II

GOD'S CHURCH AT THE BRINK



LEWIS R. WALTON

This is the Book You've Been Waiting For!

It is time for the Advent. End-time signals crackle in the wind. In America, religious zealots even call for national Sunday laws. But at this moment, a bewildering apostasy sweeps through the church. Suddenly, mysteriously, Adventists become confused about what they believe. Angry voices denounce Ellen White as a plagiarist. The church is beset by New Age notions like mysticism and manipulation of the mind. Meanwhile, powerful forces bent on changing Adventism try to seize control of the church, its publications, its educational system. Impossible? *It all happened—90 years ago!* And Ellen White warned that something like it would happen again—*just before the Second Coming!*

In this electrifying sequel to his runaway best-seller *Omega*, Attorney Lewis R. Walton tells the story of the tragic Kellogg apostasy, with lessons updated for the 1990's. *Mysticism and meditation. Subtle forms of hypnosis in the Kellogg era—and Ellen White's warning that they would reappear. How Adventist youth were especially targeted by the apostasy. And, drawing on his seven years of post-graduate study on a Catholic campus, Walton reveals a Jesuit plan to reunite all Christianity under the Papacy—by working within Protestant churches!*

This is Walton at his best—a book you can't stop reading!

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◀ The author and his son Richard.

OMEGA II:
GOD'S CHURCH AT THE BRINK

Lewis R. Walton, J.D., LL.M.

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To Mabel Nielsen Walton

1904-1993

Mother, Teacher, Friend

Preface

Read Before Opening!

*We are about to begin a story
filled with people that were very human.*

We will see a moment of high opportunity in which, at the dawn of the Twentieth Century, heaven was clearly trying to bring about the Advent. And we will see people make some tragic mistakes that delayed the Advent for many years.

As we travel through this dynamic story, so filled with fiery lessons, we should remember that these brethren of yesterday made mistakes that are painfully similar to the ones we ourselves often make today. These were not small men we can dismiss as failures. They were the cream of the crop—and they were very precious to the heart of God. As they erred, Mrs. White often paced the floor at night, pleading with God for them. The fact that they sometimes failed should remind us how frail we are. Had we been in their places, we could easily have made the same mistakes.

And so their stories are told not to make us judgmental but to help us learn. The Bible faithfully recounts the lives of men like Peter and David and Moses, with their

failures as well as their triumphs, to remind us that even the best can fail badly unless one constantly surrenders to the will of God.

As we sometimes see failure, let us never make the mistake of losing confidence in God's church. Somewhere out in the future lies one last, violent challenge to Adventism. It will be so intense that the church "may appear as about to fall." Yet we are promised that "it *does not fall*. It remains, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out." *Selected Messages*, vol. 2, p. 380. Notice that in the shaking (which I believe is the same event as the last omega apostasy), the *sinners* in Zion—not God's faithful believers—are the ones who leave the church.

God has brought this church through many storms. In the 1850's several prominent leaders defected, bitterly attacking the Spirit of Prophecy and James White's leadership (actually rejoicing on one occasion when they learned that Eld. White was ill!) Yet during this "Messenger Party" apostasy the church doubled its membership! In 1865, leaders in Iowa sought to take the whole Iowa Conference out of the church, yet the church continued to grow. In 1889, Dudley M. Canright left the ministry and wrote a book attacking Adventism, but during his lifetime the church grew from 25,000 to 175,000 members! Dr. J. H. Kellogg once predicted "complete wreckage" for the church, but by the time he died, the church had grown seven-fold, to over half a million people. There is a common theme to these stories: each time the church has faced apostasy, it has not merely survived, it has *grown!*

And why not? Where else can one find an established body of believers who so clearly fit the Biblical criteria for God's last church? Where else in all the world can one find an organized denomination that has a judgment hour message, proclaims the fall of Babylon, keeps the law of God, observes the Sabbath, expects the Advent, and has the Spirit of Prophecy?

And so as we read about the mistakes of yesterday, let us remember that God still loves this church, cares for this church, and will use this church to finish His work.

If ever there were a time to stay with the ship, it is now.

*Lewis R. Walton
Mission Bay, San Diego
February 13, 1995*

I *t is conformity to the world that is causing our people to lose their bearings. The perversion of right principles has not been brought about suddenly. The angel of the Lord presented this matter to me in symbols. It seemed as if a thief were stealthily moving closer and still closer, gradually but surely stealing away the identity of God's work...."*

The Upward Look, p. 202

Prologue

“We Will Go Anywhere ...To Do Anything”

I

On the morning of September 27, 1540, Pope Paul III sat forlornly in his private reception hall in the Palace of the Popes on Vatican Hill, probably wondering if things could get any worse.

Across Europe the Protestant Reformation was blazing like a grassfire, sweeping over entire countries where Catholic power had once seemed absolute. For the thin, dark-eyed Italian on his embattled throne, it was the stuff of which nightmares were made.

Suddenly his troubled musings were interrupted. Into his presence filed a small band of priests who had been awaiting an audience. One stood out from the rest. He was skinny, nearly bald, with a prominent nose and a noticeable limp (earned, in his prior career as a soldier, on a battlefield in Spain). His name was Iñigo de Loyola, and he had a proposal with a definite military ring.

“Holy Father,” he implored, in words paraphrased by famed Catholic author Malachi Martin, “the papacy and the Roman Catholic Church are in mortal trouble. Needed is a modern weapon to fight this totally new warfare. Give us...a new charter like no other charter

given before...Make us independent of all local authorities and directly responsible to Your Holiness...we will go *anywhere* at *any time* at *any cost* to life and comfort in order to do *anything*....”¹

Something about these men caught the Pope’s perceptive notice. These were no ordinary priests, fattened by too many years of the good life. They were lean and disciplined, and the key to their discipline lay in their training. Priests who joined this group underwent a strenuous initiation. For weeks at a time they maintained absolute silence. Under the skilled supervision of a director they practiced a form of mystical meditation, progressively subjecting their wills to that of their superior until each of them “emerged from that weeks-long regimen as a spiritual fighter completely won over to warfare...an utterly obedient servant of the pope.”²

In other words, they used the tool of religious mysticism.

Mysticism. It was a weapon most Protestants wouldn’t even recognize. It employed a logic fascinatingly similar to what one finds in many Eastern religions, and it could prove so formidable that unless a person were a thorough student of the Word, it could entangle him in a maze of questions he couldn’t answer, leaving him disoriented and defenseless.

Malachi Martin, who was once a member of their Order, is one of the most significant writers of our time. His landmark book *Keys of this Blood* should be read by everyone; it gives profound insights into the hidden forces that are shaping our world. In another of his many books he describes how Loyola’s first big project was to declare war on the Reformation.

“Their first main targets,” Martin reveals, were “the new Protestant churches pullulating throughout Europe.”

¹ Malachi Martin, *The Jesuits* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), p. 164. (Italics supplied.)

² *Ibid.*, p. 160.

They "carried the battle right into the territories of these papal enemies. They waged public controversies with kings, they *debated in Protestant universities*...they *infiltrated hostile territories in disguise* and moved around underground. They were *everywhere*."³

Never before had an Order like this existed. Paul III now had an army that with aggressive brilliance would carry the war to the enemy. Their title: *Societas Jesu*—the Society of Jesus. They would become known to history simply as the Jesuits.

II

Loyola's forces would be spectacularly successful, reclaiming much of Europe for the Papacy. And one day, late in the Twentieth Century, two of his spiritual sons, members of the Jesuit Order, would draft a plan for finishing the work that Loyola had begun. Their strategy could erase the Reformation and reunite Christianity under the influence of Rome. Almost unnoticed, their ideas would drift into Protestant churches so steadily that as the Twentieth Century neared its close, headlines would trumpet the news:

"Baptists embrace ties with Catholics"

"Evangelicals reach to Catholics"

"Catholics, evangelicals join hands"

"Catholic, evangelical decree espouses ties"

"Catholics, Protestants sign pledge of unity"

Few Adventists have failed to notice the sudden shift in world events, hurtling us toward a world that is obviously getting ready for the coming of Jesus. But in all of this there is an irony: *we have been here before—long before*. This is not the first time Adventism has come face-to-face with a potentially end-time world. It also happened at the start of the Twentieth Century, and

³ Ibid., p. 28. (Italics supplied.)

when God’s people faced that golden moment they catastrophically failed, in a massive apostasy that Ellen White called the “alpha of deadly heresies.”

In the midst of that ordeal, she penned a warning for Adventists of a future generation. It would all happen again. God’s church would face another apostasy, apparently of terrible proportions. She called it “*omega*,” and she “trembled” for our people.

III

Our story begins in the sunlight of 1900, when the work of God could have been finished quickly. It ends in the twilight of a troubled century, with the shadows of night visibly descending over our cities, our environment, and our political world. And for Adventists of today, the headlines swell into one enormous question: Are we ready this time? Or are we poised to make the same mistake we made at the start of this turbulent century?

Our story is called:

Omega II: God’s Church at the Brink.

Chapter 1

“I Would Help You If I Could”

I

It was New Year's Day, 1900, and the future seemed as bright as a spring morning. Across America the economy was roaring to life. “Furnaces are glowing,” one Senator exclaimed. “Spindles are singing their song. Happiness comes to us all with prosperity.”

The junior Senator from Ohio was not alone in that opinion. On January 1, 1900, the future seemed filled with promise. For once, the world was largely at peace. China, with its hundreds of millions, was still open to travel—and to the gospel. Within the huge land mass that her sons and daughters called Great Russia, there was still a little time. Soon war and revolution would shatter innocence, but nearly twenty years remained before the rattle of gunfire outside the Czar's winter palace would abruptly change the course of history—and the opportunities for God's work. Vast changes hung just beyond tomorrow, like the distant grey of a squall line heralding an incoming storm, but on New Year's Day, 1900, few people could see anything but the sunlight.

“If one could not have made money this past year, his case is hopeless,” exulted one newspaper editor, and

a New York clergyman glowed that “laws are becoming more just, rulers humane; music is becoming sweeter and books wiser.”

One of the few dissenting voices came from a 72-year-old lady who happened, this January 1, to be in New South Wales, Australia. Her name was Ellen G. White, and for several years she had been speaking more and more urgently about terrible problems soon to befall the world: “Soon there will be death and destruction, increasing crime, and cruel evil working against the rich who have exalted themselves against the poor.” People were developing “the most powerful machinery to wound and to kill,” she said, and the weapons thus developed would leave people with “no safety in any place” on earth.

All of this, she warned, would soon impact the work of the church. She predicted that “passage from place to place to spread the truth will soon be hedged with dangers on the right hand and on the left,” and she urged God’s people to “let the means and the workers be scattered.”⁴

Strange words, distinctly out of step with the mood of the day, and much less easy to listen to than the soothing thoughts of the Reverend Newell Hillis, who told his Brooklyn congregation about wiser books and sweeter music. But for Seventh-day Adventists, Ellen White’s warning deserved some careful reflection. She had been right repeatedly in the past. When the church had chosen to ignore her, the result had sometimes been tragic losses.

Few people could see it that bright New Year’s morning, but her predictions were on the threshold of fulfillment. That very month Lenin would be released from Siberian detention and would race across Russia toward the safety of Western Europe. In Europe itself, nations were already forming the alliances that would

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, Vol. 6, P. 22; Vol. 8, P. 50.

lead directly to World War I. And in Zurich, a young college student named Albert Einstein was writing strange formulas and wondering about the possibility of turning matter into energy. Forty-five years later his idea would light the morning sky over Hiroshima.

For the world, it seemed to be morning. But in the hourglass of history it was late—very late. A dozen years had passed since Ellen White had told the church that the Latter Rain was trying to fall. Already, Sunday legislation had been widely discussed in America. Now this: a brief flash of peace and prosperity designed to give God's people one last window of opportunity for the quick finishing of His work. And the question that confronted the church was exquisitely simple: would His people recognize how urgent the moment was? Or would they bathe in the sunlight of history's last clear day, until the opportunity disappeared?

II

On this first day of January, Mrs. White rose early and—if her usual custom prevailed—took a sponge bath, dressed, and headed promptly for her writing chair. It was a habit borne of many years. The early moments were the best, free from the distractions of the day's busier hours, and if her early rising was often brought on by painful nights, she had learned to make the best of the situation. By breakfasttime she usually had several hours of writing behind her.

This morning her mind was burdened with one problem in particular, which over the past few years had become a major concern: What was happening to the Adventist medical work? If there was one part of its ministry that the church could not afford to compromise it was the health work—medical evangelism, the "right arm" of the message. Yet there was increasing cause for concern. Disturbing reports had recently been coming out of Battle Creek, Michigan, where the church's flagship health institution was located.

For one thing, against Mrs. White's repeated urging the city had become a large and increasingly unmanageable Adventist colony. For years she had warned against the dangers of concentrating money and people in one place, yet in 1900 Adventist institutions dominated the city. Near the banks of the Kalamazoo River stood the buildings of the Review and Herald, where management, attracted by outside profits, was accepting job printing for almost any customer willing to pay. As a result, the Review was now printing some material unrecognizable as Adventism.

A block away the Dime Tabernacle accommodated capacity crowds of 3,400 people. Here 173 Sabbath School classes met each Sabbath morning, factions struggled for control, and for a brief time tithe funds were actually diverted into church operating expenses. Within a mile one could find the General Conference offices, Battle Creek College, the growing health food factory, an orphanage, and a thousand Adventists packed into an area so filled with real-estate speculators that amused (and sometimes disgusted) onlookers called it the "Adventist mining camp."⁵

For Ellen White, pondering the welfare of the church this New Year's morning, such tidings were deeply troubling. This sort of half-committed lifestyle had already delayed the Second Coming. The Advent was now late—decades late. As far back as 1883 she had said that the Lord could have come long before: "Had Adventists, after the great disappointment in 1844, held fast their faith and followed on unitedly in the opening providences of God...*Christ would have come ere this.*"⁶

She had repeated this in almost identical terms in 1894 and 1898, and had published it in two of her most widely read books, *The Great Controversy* and *The Desire*

⁵ Milton Hook, *Flames Over Battle Creek* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1977), p. 98.

⁶ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946) p. 695. (Italics supplied.)

of Ages. In this very year, 1900, she would say the same thing still another time, in Volume 6 of *Testimonies for the Church*: "Had the purpose of God been carried out by His people...Christ would, ere this, have come to the earth..." But this time she would add a pointed observation about *what*, exactly, was holding up the "purpose of God:"

"Let not means be absorbed in multiplying facilities where the work is already established. Do not add building to building where many interests are now centered."⁷

All this highlighted a problem that was rapidly veering out of control at Battle Creek: those in charge of institutions were doing exactly what she counseled *not* to do. Means, talent, and effort were being concentrated in large and increasingly unmanageable institutions, while in needy areas of the world the work suffered from lack of funds.

Unfortunately this lack of direction was reflected in the lives of lay people as well. Basking in a prosperity designed to quickly finish God's work, many people became distracted by material wealth, adding home to home and investment to investment, as though the world they lived in could go on forever. The delay in the Advent was no mystery: it was caused by a persistent failure of God's professed people to get really serious about seeing Jesus.

Now the crisis was approaching a climax. There was a looming danger that the Advent, long impeded by the people who were supposed to proclaim it, might be delayed a very long time indeed. In fact, within a few months Mrs. White would disclose that the church was on the brink of that very possibility. "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel," she said in 1901, "but for Christ's sake, His people should not

⁷ *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 450.

add sin to sin by charging God with the consequences of their own wrong course of action.”⁸

So the church had been warned: they might end up in this world a whole lot longer than anyone wished, and the cause was simply a lack of dedication to the faith they professed. Everywhere in Battle Creek one could see evidences of this, and perhaps nowhere was that any clearer than at the Sanitarium.

III

Battle Creek Sanitarium was a huge facility, a sprawling Victorian complex which stretched for nearly a fifth of a mile along Washington Street. Here, Ellen White warned, a thousand employees were beginning to see their work not as a mission but as a comfortable, semi-secular career. For a church that depended on health evangelism, that was a danger that could hardly be overstated. It meant that in an operational sense, a vital church institution was dying.

For several years the omens coming out of Battle Creek Sanitarium had been worrisome, studded with hints that the massive institution could actually be lost to the Advent message. As far back as 1895 Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, leader of the medical work, had established American Medical Missionary College. The name sounded reassuring enough—the sort of terminology well-suited to pacify nervous attendees at constituency meetings. But when asked to make the place more distinctly Adventist, Kellogg had shown that soothing clichés do not always tell the whole story. “This is not a sectarian school,” he had replied testily, and “sectarian doctrines” would not be taught there.⁹

By 1900 the Sanitarium was the strongest force in the church, which implied that if Adventism desired to

⁸ *Evangelism*, p. 696.

⁹ *Medical Missionary Conference Bulletin*, October, 1895.

secure the future of its largest institution, it would have to deal sooner or later with Dr. Kellogg.

Kellogg was a short, energetic man who in later life scurried around Battle Creek in a white suit and spats and who, it was reported, while riding his bicycle to work, often dictated correspondence to a panting male secretary racing alongside. He was a complex and fascinating character with a natural gift for medicine and an intimidating command of words, a man who could weep while reading Ellen White's letter to a worship group and who could later condemn her as a plagiarist—who could, it seemed, do almost anything except resist the temptation to lead Battle Creek Sanitarium down the treacherous road of over-expansion. Carry that mistake too far, and a whole cascade of problems would follow: over-concentration of wealth, collapse of spirituality, loss of the personal touch that had made Adventist health care so effective.

Along with this could come other problems: management difficulties, debt, financial crisis. The result could reduce the Adventist health work to just one more organization, indistinguishable from the world and scrambling to compete with other hospitals that might (in a worldly sense) be better endowed, better managed, and more successful.

It was a nightmare scenario, especially for a church that regarded the medical ministry as the right arm of its message, and Mrs. White was trying desperately to get the problem stopped before it reached some point of no return. For years she had been writing to Dr. Kellogg, begging him to call a halt to the ambitious projects at Battle Creek and to send surplus funds out to struggling new ventures in the mission field, where a lack of money left the work desperately crippled. She had received from Kellogg the strange reply that the Sanitarium's charter precluded sending money out of Michigan.

It was an ingenious argument, superficially persuasive if one did not understand the potential for legal

manipulation in all of this, but it was utterly transparent to Ellen White, who may have seen, with a prophet's eye, paneled law offices and shrewd eyes scanning documents, and an intense little man in a white suit calmly sitting while his lawyers did their work, his head tilted back slightly, fingers drumming gently on the arms of his chair. "Matters have been presented before me that have filled my soul with keen anguish," she wrote in 1898. "I saw men linking up arm in arm with lawyers; but God was not in their company...I am commissioned to say to such that you are not moving under the inspiration of the Spirit of God."¹⁰

So as early as 1898 she had warned about legal manipulations endangering the medical work, and the timing of her statement is fascinating. That very year Kellogg deftly altered Battle Creek Sanitarium's structure to a form that would allow it, one day, to be voted out of the church. In 1897 its corporate charter had expired; under Michigan law the corporation had to be dissolved, its assets sold, and a new corporation formed. If one wished to introduce change, this had been the golden opportunity, and Kellogg had not missed it.

In July of 1898 the assets of Battle Creek Sanitarium were sold to a new group headed by Dr. Kellogg, who promptly formed a new corporation. Stock ownership, once limited to Adventists, was opened to anyone willing to sign a document pledging the Sanitarium to be "undenominational, unsectarian, humanitarian, and philanthropic." To those who protested such sweeping language Kellogg had a ready answer: it was a mere formality, he reassured, so the corporation could enjoy "the advantages of the statutes of the state,"¹¹ but in reality the new corporate charter was the sort of document from which hostile takeovers spring, and by 1906 the jaws of the trap would be all-too-evident. Nearing his rupture with the church, the doctor would

¹⁰ Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 11, p. 21.

¹¹ *Medical Missionary Conference Bulletin*, May, 1899.

declare that the corporate charter forbade any activities of a "sectarian" or "denominational" character, and he would bluntly tell the church what had become of its great dream by the banks of the Kalamazoo River: "The denomination does not own the property, and never can own it, for it belongs *to the public*."¹²

In 1898 church leaders had accepted Kellogg's soothing explanation of a snare that would one day cost them dearly, and soon Kellogg had another proposal for them: why not combine every church-owned sanitarium in America under one centralized management? Whenever new sanitariums were formed, instead of being separate corporations they would become "auxiliary associations," "inseparably connected" with Battle Creek."¹³ Kellogg's suggestion would effectively seize control over the entire health care work of the church.

Mrs. White instantly recognized the danger. Consolidate many institutions under one management, give a few people control of the health work, and the whole system would depend on the skill (and spirituality) of a few powerful leaders. If they failed—if they managed poorly or lost their spiritual vision—the whole system could be damaged. Instead of being Adventism's greatest blessing, the health work could become its biggest problem, failure on a colossal scale that could set the work back a generation.

Together with other leaders she vigorously opposed the idea, but soon there were indications that it might already be too late. The dangers she had long warned about in Battle Creek had taken root. The Sanitarium, with its wealth of money and opportunity, was already attracting people who were antagonistic to Mrs. White and to the leaders that supported her. Many of these critics were talented people, trained in theology or medicine. One was a gifted song writer whose hymns

¹² *Medical Missionary Conference Bulletin*, February, 1906. (Italics supplied.)

¹³ *General Conference Bulletin*, April 18, 1901, pp. 316, 317.

had once captured the spirit of the Advent message.

Some of them—financed, it was rumored, from the rich cash flow in the Sanitarium—soon began putting together a book denouncing Mrs. White as a fraud. Prominent figures began to speak with growing boldness of a great transformation in the church, of new objectives and a new mission. And meanwhile, little by little beneath the surface, protected by Battle Creek's wealth and by Dr. Kellogg's capacity for persuasion, the dissenters would press steadily toward goals still carefully hidden from all except the eyes of a 72-year-old woman in Australia who saw, as she slept, strange meetings and nighttime conferences, and a white-suited man with a power of persuasion unexplainable in human terms.

IV

And that is the problem that burdens Ellen White's mind as the New Year's sunrise warms the summer sky over Cooranbong. The great medical arm of the church, so necessary to break down prejudice and to open doors to the Advent message, is being separated inexorably from Adventism. Mrs. White takes a clean piece of paper, lifts her pen, and the words begin to flow to President George Irwin of the General Conference: "Dear Brother Irwin:...Save Dr. Kellogg from himself. He is not heeding the counsel he should heed."¹⁴

Nineteen hundred—and the opportunities to finish God's work have never been brighter. For once the world is largely at peace. From Maine to Manilla, from Paris to Canton, one can go almost anywhere with the gospel. Eager for a health message most of them have never heard, people seek outdoor exercise and turn their unmet needs into a mad craze for bicycling. Those who can get to Battle Creek come by the thousands, unaware of the struggles that roil beneath the surface, thrilled even with a partial view of truth.

¹⁴ Ellen G. White letter 3, 1900.

Toiling angels have done all that heaven can do to prepare the world for the Advent message. The great latter-rain message of victory in Jesus has been offered. Everywhere, prophetic events are falling into place. It is inconceivable that such an opportunity can be missed, and yet it is happening. The Battle Creek Sanitarium is on a departure course from the church, its funds misapplied, its legal structure manipulated. At the Review and Herald, such objectionable material is being accepted for printing that Mrs. White even worries about those who will be exposed to it while setting type. The basic theology of the church will soon be challenged by unorthodox ideas that will threaten such vital truths as the heavenly sanctuary.

Desperate to protect the church from danger, she will soon warn Adventist parents to keep their children away from Battle Creek, where they might be "leavened by the insinuations.... introduced to weaken confidence in our ministers and message."¹⁵

New Year's Day, 1900. In Shanghai, British steamships turn lazily at their buoys on the Huang-p'u River, basking in the dreamy winter sun. In St. Petersburg, Russia's nobility speeds in bright-red sleighs along the banks of the Neva River and then hurries home to dress for the evening. And in Berlin, Count Alfred von Schlieffen already knows that when the war comes, it will rage across the open, flat plains of Belgium. He knows, because the maps are already drawn.

And in the writings of the Adventist Church the words reach out in one last desperate bid for recognition before it is too late: "Human agents are being trained and are using their inventive power to put in operation the most powerful machinery to wound and to kill...Let the means and the workers be scattered."¹⁶

The last moments of sunlight are slipping away from God's people as they buy and sell real estate, and build

¹⁵ Ellen G. White, *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, p.3.

¹⁶ *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 50.

additions to Battle Creek Sanitarium, and begin to play with doubts that seem as intriguing as a sparkler on the Fourth of July. Soon a letter, penned by Ellen White a few days before Christmas, will reach Dr. Kellogg's desk. "I write to you as a mother would write to her son. I would help you if I could...I would go to see you if I could...If you receive the messages of warning sent you, you will be saved from great trial."¹⁷

Everything is so ready. Like Israel at the Jordan, God's people are only a short journey from the Promised Land.

It is time for the Advent message to go like fire in a hayfield.

It is time for the devil's counterattack.

It is time for an apostasy called the *alpha*.

¹⁷ *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, pp. 190-191.

Chapter 2

“We Received the Sad News”

I

February 18, 1902. In the cold predawn hours the alarm gong sounded inside the brick-and-stone arches of the Battle Creek Fire Department. Lights flickered on; men fumbled with the brass buttons on their clumsy, double-breasted coats while downstairs harnesses dropped onto the engine horses. A driver swung himself onto the seat of the pump engine, grabbed a handful of reins, and the big machine clattered out over the brick pavement, shattering the silence of a black winter morning. It was Tuesday, and Battle Creek Sanitarium was burning to the ground.

On the Sanitarium grounds the night staff scrambled to lead four hundred patients to safety while the main building became a pillar of flames. The firemen worked heroically; this was, after all, Battle Creek's biggest and best building; but nothing they could do seemed to stay the inferno. Indeed, one of them later remarked that water poured on the flames seemed only to add to their fury. By dawn most of the great complex was gone, reduced to steaming ruins beneath the winter sky.

Dr. Kellogg was returning from the Pacific Coast when he learned about the tragedy from a newspaper reporter

at the Chicago railroad station. He immediately went to work. Boarding the train, he ordered his secretary to procure a table, and he spent the rest of the trip hunched over it, sketching plans for a new building.

Mrs. White reacted as soon as she heard the news. "To-day we received the sad news of the burning of the Battle Creek Sanitarium," she wrote, in a tone that bore no hint of self-righteous I-told-you-so's. For her the work of God was still the work of God, and church institutions were still precious, even when they had strayed from God's ideal. "I would at this time speak words of wisdom, but what can I say? We are afflicted with those whose life interests are bound up in this institution...We can indeed weep with those who weep."¹⁸

But she expressed no surprise. For many weeks she had worried about events in Battle Creek, her nights made "very restless" by a premonition of coming trouble. Now it had arrived. Years of toil had just gone up in smoke, and the medical work had been severely hurt. Yet despite its damage, this storm might have a silver lining. While it stood, Battle Creek Sanitarium had been the biggest argument against following God's advice about overbuilding. Now the argument was gone, a pile of wet charcoal beneath a pale winter sunrise, and she had some earnest advice for the brethren who would soon be meeting to deal with all of this: under no circumstances rebuild at Battle Creek. Instead, construct a number of smaller institutions so that the problems of the past would not recur, and so that more geographic areas could be exposed to the Advent message. "A solemn responsibility rests upon those who have had charge of the Battle Creek Sanitarium. Will they build up in Battle Creek a mammoth institution, or will they carry out the purpose of God by making plants in many places?"¹⁹ The disaster, tragic as it was, offered a chance to get back on course before things became worse. (As

¹⁸ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, p. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

church leaders would soon learn, bad as the fire was, things could get *much* worse).

Mrs. White’s question was one the brethren would have to answer very soon, and at this point the story develops a power all its own, gathering a momentum probably unrealized by the actors at the time. The brethren who would decide this issue were poised at one of those invisible forks in the road where a decision can change much forever. They could choose to follow the advice of the Spirit of Prophecy—which might force them to ignore personal welfare, stand on principle, and accept some political risks. Or they could choose an easier route, opting for some version of a compromise.

Following Ellen White’s counsel would not be particularly easy. With one explicit question she had put herself on a collision course with Dr. Kellogg, and therein lay an irony. Kellogg was an old friend whom she regarded highly and to whom she liked to write “as a mother would write to her son.”²⁰ She had encouraged him to study medicine and had helped him do it; he had taken to *materia medica* with singular genius, a natural-born doctor if ever there were one, and now he was one of the most famous physicians in America. Despite the set-back of the fire, Kellogg was still a potent force to reckon with—an amiable and articulate man, bubbling over with ideas that ranged all the way from hospital architecture to theology, and he was surrounded by powerful friends.

When the brethren met to decide what to do, he would be able to advance formidable arguments for rebuilding in Battle Creek—arguments he would develop with convincing force as he spoke before his spellbound peers. Leave Battle Creek? Battle Creek *was* Adventism. *Everything* was here: the General Conference, the Review, the Dime Tabernacle, the health food industry. Here one could find workers and resources. Here the

²⁰ *Testimonies*, Vol. 8, p. 190.

world could come calling (and Kellogg would be right: Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, even European royalty would come to Battle Creek for treatment). Lose all of that? And for what? Little institutions scattered around in places no one had ever heard of? Besides—and here Kellogg's flair for the dramatic could unfold as, with a flourish he produced them—the *plans* were already drawn!

In short, to expose oneself to Kellogg at his best was to risk hearing ideas so well expressed that to vote against them might seem like denying one's own better judgment.

(There was, of course, one factor that the brethren might have done well to ponder before going into the committee room: Kellogg couldn't see the future.)

There were other things the brethren might have considered in the troubled early spring of 1902. Failure to follow frequently repeated warnings from the Spirit of Prophecy had already severely damaged the Church. When one of God's institutions disappears in a pre-dawn inferno, it is not because God can't protect His work. Indeed, when that happens the most natural question to ask is *why*? Why did He let it happen?

Had anyone reflected very long on that question, many answers would have suggested themselves. Against repeated warnings and appeals, an institution had been allowed to slide so far from God's plan that apparently it had slipped outside any umbrella of protection that God would otherwise have provided. Could it be that He *had* to allow the loss—that the institution had simply become too useless to His work to justify any further divine intervention, even for its physical safety? (Mrs. White indicated as much, saying plainly that "God swept the large Sanitarium out of the way.")²¹ If so, then the issues here were far too big for the tempting "solution" of compromise. There was principle at stake here—

²¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, p. 26.

principle of the sort that God’s leaders are paid to recognize.

It has been said that aviation is 99% boredom and 1% stark terror. Perhaps there is a variant of that chestnut that might apply to the leaders of God’s work: once in awhile an issue comes along where you earn your lifetime of pay checks in a single moment—an issue that is worth everything, including the risk of one’s career. When that happens, it is a terrible thing to fail the Lord.

And that is what made this mysterious, invisible cross-roads so important. True, the work had been damaged in a fire wanted by no one, least of all by Ellen White. But there was still a chance to turn things around without further loss. *There was still time.* And the way back? Reject even apparently attractive arguments about rebuilding, act on the advice God had given, and create the chain of small, rural institutions that would, Mrs. White insisted, provide the best possible atmosphere for real health evangelism.

Do that, and Adventism could provide a world model for delivering the best possible health care at the lowest possible cost.

Do that, and Adventism could prove—in advance—that health care costs don’t have to spiral into national bankruptcy.

Do that, even though in the short term it might offend human judgment and strain a few old friendships.

In other words, act on faith.

Much has been said about the need for righteousness by faith. Here was a time and place for leadership to act out the idea. Faith, after all, is simply trusting God enough to follow His advice. Congregations are told to do it. New converts often have to choose between the Sabbath and a job. Tithe is paid, even when the bank account is thin, because faith compels a person to be honest with the Lord (and to trust that He will take care of one’s temporal needs). But now the brethren were facing an

issue where the wrong decision could send a confusing message to the world field: why trust the Lord with your soul when you can't even trust Him to pick out the right location for a hospital?

There was still a little time—not much, but perhaps enough. The work might still be finished before the dreadful problems waiting out there in the Twentieth Century crashed down on a naively unsuspecting world. And that issue, perhaps more than anyone knew, might hinge on what happened in a committee room. Because the wrong decision made here, over something as apparently inconsequential as whether to rebuild a sanitarium, could start a chain of events that would plunge Adventism into the worst crisis of its 58 year history and leave God's people waiting “many more years” in this world.

II

On Monday, March 17, 1902, a large group of church leaders met at Battle Creek. Kellogg was there, bright with enthusiasm, painting verbal pictures of a magnificent new building, and though Ellen White's warning was less than a month old, the brethren listened raptly, caught up in the disorienting atmosphere of politics, collegiality, and business logic. One simply couldn't argue with the doctor: Battle Creek *was* Adventism; the Sanitarium had put the church on a world map, and to crawl away now, defeated by a fire, might indeed seem to send the wrong message. For those still troubled by the advice from the Spirit of Prophecy, Kellogg provided a soothing promise: the new Sanitarium need not be too large; instead of replacing both major buildings, he'd be willing to limit construction to just one building, five stories in height and 450 feet in length.

After another fiery disaster, Lot once pleaded to go to the city of Zoar, with the childlike argument, “is it not a little one?”²² Now the group in Battle Creek replicated

²² Genesis 19:20.

his reasoning in their own way: if rebuilding in Battle Creek *was* an error, couldn't the error be kept small by putting up a smaller building? At last the vote was taken. Kellogg could have his new institution, so long as the size was kept limited. (Only later, on inspecting the foundation footings, would they discover how loosely Kellogg intended to interpret his restrictions.)

So the brethren compromised. At an invisible fork in the road they had chosen a direction that satisfied human reason, political inclination, and institutional pride. One wonders whether, as they left, any of them had troubling second thoughts: whether they remembered that on prior occasions, carelessness with the Spirit of Prophecy had brought on needless loss; *whether they dreamed that the course they had chosen would lead their Church into a collision so terrible that it could be compared to a ship hitting an iceberg.*

It is important to stop here and realize that these were not bad men, trying to lead the church into trouble; many of them were good people who would soon have reason to regret their mistake, and with whom Ellen G. White would solidly stand as they tried to bring the church back from the crisis they had created. Their mistake is one that we, too, could easily have made in the same circumstances—and one which we may often repeat in our own lives: choosing to ignore divine counsel when it leads away from our own inclinations.

In any event, they would shortly be served with notice that something was very wrong with their decision. Having opted to substitute their own judgment for clear instructions from the Lord, they soon encountered something that often greets leaders when they make such mistakes: they crashed headlong into a financial crisis.

III

Some 850 years before the birth of Christ, a king named Jehoshaphat had faced an emergency. Out in the badlands of the Jordan Valley, heathen kings

had allied against him, combining their forces into an army so overwhelming that Judah's defeat seemed a certainty. In that time of peril Jehoshaphat had the sense to realize that the only advice worth listening to came from God, and he did the one thing left for him. He prayed.

In the course of that prayer meeting an obscure Levite stood up and declared that he had received a message from the Lord. We know little about him. He appears in only four short verses of scripture and then disappears from history—hardly the sort of credentials upon which one might care to risk the survival of an army. Further, his advice seemed to make absolutely no sense. Confronted with vastly superior numbers, Judah's one slim chance for survival was to stay within their fortified city, yet Jahaziel told them to leave the city and expose themselves, in the open, to violent danger.

To anyone trained in military tactics, the advice sounds absurd; no responsible military officer would subject troops to that sort of exposure. Yet King Jehoshaphat did. Why? Because he believed he had gotten advice from the Lord. And as he marched his army out to what would be a stunning victory, he uttered a statement that ought to be framed on the wall of every denominational committee room in the world: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; *believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.*"²³

When God's people stay close to His plan, He has promised that there will be funds enough for His work. "If the ministers manifest a spirit of self-sacrifice and a love for souls, means will not be withheld from the cause," Ellen White wrote in *Testimonies*, Volume 2, and in Volume 8 she framed her thoughts in the form of a promise:

"When there is a seeking of the Lord and a confession of sin, when the needed reformation takes

²³ 2 Chronicles 20:20. (Italics supplied.)

place...zeal...will be shown in restoring what has been withheld. The Lord will manifest His pardoning love, and *means will come to cancel the debts on our institutions.*”²⁴

In 1902, institutional debt loomed like a monster. It soon became obvious that the building Kellogg had in mind was going to cost a lot of money—money no one had, nor knew how to get. One can only imagine the painful tension in the committee room as a group of leaders, having committed themselves to a building program, now had to confront the uncomfortable fact that they had no way of paying the bill. At length, A. G. Daniells, President of the General Conference, concocted an idea he would soon have reason to bitterly regret. He recalled that Ellen White had recently dedicated her book *Christ's Object Lessons* for the purpose of raising funds for Adventist schools. It had been quite successful, and Daniells wondered whether Dr. Kellogg, a nationally famous health lecturer, might write a popular medical book to help raise the funds needed in Battle Creek.

Kellogg readily agreed. He was a prolific writer, who dictated on the train, from his bicycle, even from the bathtub to a male secretary who seems to have functioned reasonably well despite the distracting circumstances, and he undertook this book project with gusto. The topic would be health, to be sure. But there was something else he wanted to try out on the public, and here was the perfect opportunity.

For some time now he had been pondering some new ideas about the nature of God. This Entity we talked about on Sabbaths and sang about, and sometimes tried to picture: what *was* He, *really*? Was He really a Being, located in some place called heaven? Or was there another option, bright with intriguing possibilities: might His presence be found in everything He had created?

If so, this opened whole new vistas for the human

²⁴ *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 629; Vol. 8, p. 89. (Italics supplied.)

mind. If God was *in* everything, that meant that He was also physically a part of us. Tune into that idea, and there was nothing humanity couldn't become.

In short, in the springtime of 1902 Dr. John Harvey Kellogg—who had just effectively been handed the future of the Adventist health work—was playing with a thing called mysticism. He had bumped into something we now call New Age.

All of this would find expression in the manuscript he was completing at A.G. Daniells' request. His book would be entitled *The Living Temple*. Kellogg plunged energetically into the task, writing furiously to get the book completed in record time, and by early summer he had it finished—just in time to depart on an extended summer vacation in Europe.

So the die was cast. Battle Creek Sanitarium would be rebuilt notwithstanding Ellen White's advice, and the brethren would soon learn that they were playing a game in which the stakes were high and the rules very uncertain. Inspecting the foundations one day in early summer, someone discovered a curious fact: they were 100 feet longer than the doctor had promised, and it now appeared that several large wings would extend in a semicircle from the rear of the building. In 1904 Mrs. White's words summarized the situation sadly: "When the Lord swept the large Sanitarium out of the way at Battle Creek, He did not design that it should ever be built there again...Had this counsel been heeded, the heavy responsibilities connected with the Battle Creek Sanitarium would not now exist. These responsibilities are a terrible burden. This institution should have been divided into several parts. But the light that had been given regarding this was not followed."²⁵

The "terrible burden" to which she referred was, of course, financial. Kellogg was rebuilding on a grand scale, far in excess of anything the brethren had imagined,

²⁵ *Special Testimonies* Series B, No. 6, p. 26.

and it was beginning to be expensive. The building on Washington Street was materializing into a massive Italian renaissance structure ultimately capable of accommodating more than one thousand patients—some ten times the number Mrs. White suggested as ideal. There were five acres of glistening floor space, with marble inlays installed by the same skilled Italian artisans who had supervised the mosaic work at the Library of Congress, and it appeared that nothing would be spared to make the place "the most complete, thoroughly equipped, and perfect establishment of the sort in the world."²⁶ The financial load imposed by such grandiose planning soon grew staggering.

"Believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." The words hung heavy over Battle Creek—heavy with the aura of a wasted yesterday. Little by little, some of the brethren began to realize that this was not just a casual mistake. Something very bad was happening, the full dimensions of which were still unclear. Looking back, one could see a definable bend in the ship's wake. The ship had changed course. It was now heading north, out into a stretch of ocean where the winds blew cold and where, behind the fog of the future, lurked the grimmest danger of all: icebergs.

IV

The financial burden the church faced was bad enough, but at least it could be quantified in a column of figures. Add them up, and you knew the extent of the bad news. What the church could not afford was a crisis in theology. Money was, after all, only money. It was a shame to lose it, but one could always get more of the stuff. But the theological basis for Adventism—that was a different story. Unsettle belief in that, and the damage could be incalculable. And now, as night follows day, the brethren got a stark lesson in cause-and-effect.

²⁶ *The Battle Creek Sanitarium Food Idea*, Vol. I, No. 1, Nov. 15, 1902.

They had chosen to ignore advice that probably just didn't seem all that important. As a result, they had entrusted the future of the health work to a man with an agenda they didn't begin to understand. He quickly ran things into deep financial turmoil, creating the next layer of crisis. Left to their own imperfect judgment, they had groped for ways to raise money, and decided that Kellogg should write a book. And that, in turn, led them still further into difficulty—an emergency that would shake the church to its very core. For Kellogg's manuscript contained the makings of an unparalleled crisis in doctrine.

One of the oldest errors in the world is mankind's persistent desire to reduce God to some force we can manipulate in order to accomplish something—to gain insight, to promote self, to become (as Lucifer put it), “as gods.” Inherent in this error is that God is an intelligence extending through all space and matter. Tap into it, through meditation, for example, and you can supposedly become godlike yourself. It is the essence of many Eastern religions. It is also the basis for Lucifer's oldest lie, straight out of Eden, the bait that led Adam and Eve into a fatal mistake.

For several years Kellogg had been making some rather odd statements about the nature of God that showed that he was in danger of drifting in this direction. “God is in me,” he had told a General Conference meeting recently, “and everything I do is God's power; every single act is a creative act of God.”²⁷ It was a fascinating idea that seemed to bring Deity intriguingly near, and it quickly captured the attention of some well-known denominational personalities. There was a peculiar charm about Kellogg's suggestion that the air we breathe is the medium through which God sends His Holy Spirit physically into our lives, that the sunlight is His visible “Shekinah.” Even well-trained people were responding to the new concept, catching fire from Kellogg's

²⁷ *G.C. Bulletin*, 2d Quarter, 1901, p. 497.

evangelical enthusiasm. Now these sentiments showed up in the galley sheets of the new book he had chosen to call *The Living Temple*. In the human body, he asserted, was “the Power which builds, which creates—it is God Himself, the divine Presence in the temple.”²⁸

Few people realized that this idea could take one clear out of Christianity, into a realm of religious mysticism that had no room for the Divine Being or a place called heaven. But one man who instantly saw the danger was Eld. W. A. Spicer, and for good reason: he was a recently returned missionary from India, and to him Kellogg’s new theology sounded like the same ideas he had heard in Hinduism. Alarmed, he went to Kellogg, no doubt hoping that all of this was an innocent misunderstanding that could be straightened out with a personal chat. The two men sat down on the veranda of the rambling twenty-seven room house that Kellogg called “The Residence,” and Spicer, to his dismay, found himself “at once in the midst of a discussion of the most controversial questions.”

“Where is God?” Kellogg asked.

“He is in heaven,” Spicer replied. “There the Bible pictures the throne of God, and all the heavenly beings at his command.”

Kellogg, 50 years of age and 13 years Spicer’s senior, imperiously swept his arm in a gesture toward the lawn, declaring that God was in the grass, the trees, the plants, everything about them.

To repeat a point made earlier in this book, mysticism is a concept very foreign to most Christians. It employs a logic quite similar to that found in some Eastern religions, and it often argues from a series of questions, designed to lead one into a corner from which there is no apparent escape. Kellogg bored ahead, posing another question.

²⁸ J.H. Kellogg, *The Living Temple* (Battle Creek, Mich: Good Health Publishing Company, 1903), p. 52.

"Where is heaven?" he asked.

"In the center of the universe," Spicer replied. "Where that is, one cannot say."

Kellogg's retort was immediate, steeped in mystical logic:

"Heaven is where God is," he asserted, "and God is everywhere."

The syllogism was classic, with overtones of Matreya and Dignaga out of Fourth Century India:

Heaven is where God is.

God is everywhere.

Therefore heaven is everywhere as well.

Spicer left the interview stunned, realizing that he had glimpsed the tip of something larger than anyone imagined. This could endanger the church. "There was no place in this scheme of things for angels going between heaven and earth...The cleansing of the sanctuary...was not something in a far-away heaven." The heart was "the Sanctuary to be cleansed."²⁹

W. A. Spicer had encountered the first wind of the storm, and he read its meaning with terrible accuracy. In the summer of 1902, while the world stood ready for the third angel's message and the last moments of peaceful opportunity drifted away, one of the main pillars of the Adventist faith had suddenly been challenged. In a way that he may not have fully understood himself, Kellogg had assailed the very rationale for Adventism. He had attacked the doctrine of the heavenly sanctuary.

V

At the very heart of Seventh-day Adventist doctrine stood the belief that in 1844 Jesus had entered heaven's holy of holies for a final act of reconciliation called the

²⁹ Ellen G. White Estate Document File 15 C, W.A. Spicer, "How the Spirit of Prophecy Met a Crisis," p. 21.

Investigative Judgment.

Adventists based that belief on prophecies found in Daniel 8 and 9, in which 2300 years of prophetic time began with the decree of a Persian king in 457 B.C. and ended in the fall of A.D. 1844. In the autumn of that year they had reviewed those prophecies, seeking to understand why Christ had not returned as the Millerite preachers had predicted. Their research led them to a theology not understood in the Christian world, a linkage between the 2,300 year prophecy of Daniel and the Hebrew Day of Atonement. In Chapter 6 we will explore in depth how they reached this conclusion. But for now, it is enough to say that in the whole Christian world this concept is to be found only in Seventh-day Adventism. It is utterly unique. And it is compellingly logical. It puts the whole plan of salvation on a rational, legal footing, and explains, with illuminating clarity, how God finally halts the problem called *sin*.

But this doctrine has also provoked heated resentment, and for a very simple reason: it opens issues many Christians would be much happier not to address.

The sanctuary doctrine compels one to look, by faith, into the most holy place. There one encounters the Ark of the Covenant, within which is the Law of God. With the Law comes the seventh-day Sabbath, written by God in stone—a disquieting reminder that even Protestants have unquestioningly accepted a day of worship imposed by a decree from Rome. And with a clearer view of the book of Daniel comes the inescapable fact that the “man of sin” foretold in Scripture is not a pagan force. Antichrist is an apostasy within the Christian faith.

Thus the Adventist sanctuary doctrine contains prickly issues for both Protestants and Catholics alike, and from the very beginning it was vigorously assailed. Theologians from other faiths ridiculed it as a transparent attempt to explain away the disappointment of 1844. Sometimes the attacks even came from within, raised by those who professed to be Adventists themselves. From every

quarter assaults on this doctrine had come, so persistent and intense that Ellen White finally said despairingly that “for the past fifty years every phase of heresy has been brought to bear upon us, to becloud our minds regarding the teaching of the word—especially concerning the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary...”³⁰ And she had cried out, “God forbid that the clatter of words coming from human lips should lessen the belief of our people in the truth that there is a sanctuary in heaven, and that a pattern of this sanctuary was once built on this earth.”³¹

Some of the loudest “clatter,” as Mrs. White chose to call it, had come from a once-prominent Adventist minister by the name of D. M. Canright, who had flirted for years with doubts and who finally left the church altogether, thereafter making it his mission in life to attack his former beliefs. In 1889 he had published a book entitled *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, in which he charged that “Seventh-Day Adventists make everything turn upon their view of the sanctuary...If they are wrong on this, their whole theory breaks down.”³² Having said that, he next proceeded to an attack on Ellen G. White, followed by assaults on the Sabbath, the law, and the state of the dead. Nearing the end of his 418 pages, Canright reached his conclusion: “The system of Seventh-Day Adventism rests for its foundation on the unsupported theories of an uneducated old farmer in his last days and the reveries of a totally uneducated, unread, sickly, excitable girl.”³³

While still an Adventist minister, Canright had once complained that he could have become an acclaimed preacher were it not for the unpopularity of the Advent message. For a time he may have enjoyed a bit of the

³⁰ Ellen G. White manuscript 44, 1905.

³¹ Ellen G. White letter 233, 1904.

³² D. M. Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced* (New York: Flenning H. Revell Co., 1889), p. 117.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 413.

glory for which he had dreamed. His book was accepted by a major New York publisher, and curious people came to hear this once-talented Adventist debater ridicule his former church. (His book would still be used in the late Twentieth Century by evangelical critics of Adventism.) But Canright's brief day in the sun ended like a classic tragedy. Turned out of his pastorate in a prominent Protestant church, he finally roamed ghost-like around Battle Creek, selling shopworn books (some of them Adventist) for a meager door-to-door living. At last he found himself with nothing except lonely memories of what might-have-been. In 1919, with the shadows of his last illness deepening about him, he would reach out from the twilight into which he was descending, for one last appeal to his brother: "Stay with the message, Jasper. I left and I know I am dying, a lost man."³⁴

Canright had chosen to attack the sanctuary doctrine frontally, charging that Adventists had misinterpreted Daniel 8:14 and mistakenly linked it with Leviticus 16, which describes the Jewish Day of Atonement. Christ had gone directly into the most holy place at His ascension, Canright argued (a point we'll deal with in Chapter 6), and hence Adventist emphasis on the cleansing of the sanctuary in 1844 was wrong.

All this was, to repeat, a direct attack on the church's basic beliefs; it took no special gift to read his book and see that he was no longer an Adventist. But the newest challenge to the sanctuary, coming from Dr. Kellogg in 1902, was anything but obvious. It led one through a series of seemingly logical steps, each somewhat concealed from the next, so that it was possible to find oneself far afield from Adventism before realizing that anything was wrong. For people who longed to know more about God, it was intriguing to picture Him in the sunlight and to believe that He was physically part of every act of life.

Yet if a person cared to think about it, Kellogg's

³⁴ E. G. White Estate Document File 351, letter dated July 5, 1970.

theories posed questions that attacked basic Adventism—questions that Spicer had already encountered on Kellogg's veranda. If God is everywhere, and if heaven is where God is, then heaven must also be everywhere. If so, then where is the sanctuary? Kellogg's answer could be deduced from the title of his new book, *The Living Temple*. According to Kellogg, God's sanctuary was in the human body—a step in logic that compelled one to discard the events of 1844 as an irrelevance unsuited to new light. At best, 1844 would merely be tolerated as a way station on Adventism's road toward "maturity."

It was a subtle error, perhaps not even completely understood by the doctor himself, and yet some denominational leaders were starting to recognize it. Spicer had seen it. Daniells was beginning to. Ellen White would soon be writing urgent warnings. And the question that began spreading around Battle Creek was this: Should Kellogg's new book even be printed?

It was not a simple problem. As 1902 waned, the expensive sanitarium construction was threatening a major financial crisis. For monetary reasons, Dr. Kellogg's book was badly needed. Then, too, a good many people around Battle Creek saw nothing at all wrong with the book, and were adopting the doctor's theology with evangelical gusto.

Six months earlier, the brethren had met to decide what to do about Battle Creek Sanitarium. Two voices had competed for their loyalties: Ellen G. White, who claimed to have a message from the Lord, and J. H. Kellogg, who fairly glittered with grand ideas. Unknowingly, church leaders had stood at an invisible crossroads, whose existence was identified only by the pleading tones of an elderly lady who could see disaster coming. Now the consequences of their decision were cascading down upon them in bewildering disarray. Financial crisis. A building unsuited for the world mission of the church. A desperate gamble at raising funds. And the result of that gamble: a book containing a heresy so

profound it could threaten to destroy Adventism.

It was a turbulent atmosphere in which the General Conference Committee met in the fall of 1902 to decide whether to issue a printing order to the manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Company. Their decision was not made easier by the report of the reading committee who had been appointed to review Kellogg's manuscript and recommend whether it be printed or scrubbed. Already the struggle for control was evident in the decision of the committee: the majority saw "no reason why it may not be recommended,"³⁵ a report signed by such men as A. T. Jones, who had traveled and preached with Ellen White in the years following 1888. Only two of the five committee members voted against the book.

And then occurred one of those events that forever turns the course of history, altering the relationships between people and institutions. The Autumn Council of 1902 accepted the minority report; the book would not be published, and the church would at long last simply trust the Lord to lead it out of this crisis.

By all denominational norms, that should have been the end of the matter. But in 1902 Dr. Kellogg was nearing a point of no return. For several years he had rejected messages from Mrs. White that crossed his plans, usually with the excuse that she had acted on "false" information supplied by his foes, and that her testimonies to him were thus mistaken. Now he was faced with a direct challenge from the organized church, and he had to make a decision. Quickly he seized an alternative: Didn't the Review accept outside printing orders? (They most certainly did; in recent years they had even printed stuff containing spiritualism, to Mrs. White's anguished regret.) A message went down Washington Street to the Adventist Central Publishing House: print 5,000 copies

³⁵ Document File 15C, Spicer, "How the Spirit of Prophecy Met a Crisis," p. 29.

of *The Living Temple* and charge the job to J. H. Kellogg.

The order was accepted! The *Review*, which by this time was accustomed to printing strange material, had apparently so lost its institutional judgment that Kellogg's book was accepted despite its error. In the printshop men went to work. Type was set. Plates were readied. In the pressroom neat piles of paper stood ready for the bite of the big steam press. In a quiet California valley Ellen White went to bed troubled by a premonition she understood all too well: "In the visions of the night I have seen an angel standing with a sword as of fire stretched over Battle Creek....Disaster seemed to follow disaster..."³⁶

For the *Review*, time could now be measured in hours.

³⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 97.

Chapter 3

“A Sword as of Fire”

I

Arthur G. Daniells, the 44-year-old leader of the General Conference, worked late on the evening of December 30, 1902. During a few moments' break he chatted first with his young administrative assistant and then with I. H. Evans, general manager of the Review and Herald Publishing Company. It was a warm evening as Michigan winters went, snowless and quiet, and the two men may well have been relaxed and congenial in their conversation. In an otherwise bleak year, the Review, at least, seemed to be doing well. It was the largest and most modern publishing house in Michigan, and year-end figures promised a healthy profit for 1902. For a church struggling with finances in Battle Creek, that was welcome news.

From a block up Washington Street the Tabernacle bell announced prayer meeting, and Daniells may have glanced at his watch to discover that it was now seven-thirty. If so, that was the last routine act he would perform that night. Moments later the lights went out as the city power supply suddenly failed. From across the street came a lurid glow that was unmistakable to anyone who had seen the Sanitarium burn down. Both men bolted

for the door. The Review and Herald main building was on fire.

By the time Evans and Daniells reached the street, the entire pressroom was ablaze. It was a furious sight, broken by periodic explosions as the windows blew out of superheated offices—a weird, apocalyptic night filled with shouting firemen, and cascades of glass, and clanking pump engines, and straining arcs of water that seemed to disappear into the fire to no effect. From time to time one could hear the crash of heavy machinery as the floors collapsed, dumping the best presses in Michigan into the inferno below: fifty-three years of toil and sacrifice and dearly bought equipment, raining down in a wild avalanche of shattered cast iron and melted type.

In scarcely an hour it was all over. The Review and Herald Publishing house (with its promise of profits for 1902) was gone, a pile of charcoal and scattered brick, with broken Adventist presses lying among the melted plates of Kellogg's *Living Temple*.

Gone. Within one devastating year two major institutions of the Seventh-day Adventist Church had disappeared in smoke, and Chief Weeks, of the Battle Creek Fire Department, summed it all up as well as anyone could: "There is something strange about your SDA fires, with the water poured on acting more like gasoline."³⁷ For several weeks an eerie reminder hung over Battle Creek, making it impossible to forget what had happened. During the blaze a large coal pile had caught fire. It burned clear into February, producing a column of smoke that reminded, mutely, of Ellen White's warning: "Unless there is a reformation, calamity will overtake the publishing house, and the world will know the reason."³⁸ Now the dreaded event had happened, and for weeks the message was painted in the Michigan sky.

³⁷ Quoted in a letter from B. P. Fairchild to A. L. White, December 4, 1965.

³⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 96.

"For many years I have carried a heavy burden for our institutions," Mrs. White wrote, after receiving the sad telegram. "Sometimes I have thought I would attend no more large gatherings for our people, for my messages seem to leave little impression on the minds of our leading brethren after the meetings have closed." She spoke mournfully of how she left such meetings "pressed down as a cart beneath sheaves,"³⁹ and as she stared numbly at the flimsy yellow telegram, with its dreadful message laid out in pasted rows of letters, she may have remembered that day so long ago when the publishing work began—a summer day in 1849, and a frayed carpet bag that held the entire first issue of *Present Truth*, and her husband James hefting it as he started walking to Middletown, Connecticut, for a fifteen mile round trip on foot.

So long ago...*so very long ago*. The work had begun with the extraordinary energy only sacrifice can generate, but one by one the decades had slipped by. In those passing years God's people had developed a habit that had repeatedly robbed them of the chance to see heaven in their lifetimes: they had learned to ignore His advice when it didn't suit their preferences. Now the work was years behind. If God's people continued to move at this glacial pace, the world would be a long time waiting for the coming of Jesus.

"Ere this..." The words lingered like smoke over Battle Creek. There was a lesson here for the people who called themselves *the remnant*—an expensive lesson, purchased at the cost of two institutions: would they finally learn to follow God's plan for the conduct of His work?

This was a question that Dr. Kellogg seemed on the verge of answering irrevocably. He had been warned repeatedly by Ellen White that his new theology would lead him and all who followed him onto perilous ground.

³⁹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, p. 56.

The organized church had refused to print his manuscript. He had proceeded on his own, and now the wreckage of the Review and Herald Publishing Company lay beneath a column of coal smoke that smudged the wintry sky. By any measure of judgment there was a message here for Dr. Kellogg; yet he was about to demonstrate the power of a choice that, having rejected truth, led one ever further from it. One of his first acts was to take his manuscript to an outside publisher for printing!

Kellogg had embarked on a direct challenge to church leadership, and it soon became apparent that the game might involve more than the printing of one book—might, in fact, involve control of the General Conference itself.

II

On June 28, 1905, while in California, Ellen White issued what may be the most startling testimony ever given to the church. In it, she bluntly said that a plan was underfoot to seize control of the property and structure of the church. It is such an astonishing piece of writing that I want to display the opening lines here, in the format in which she published them.

A SOLEMN WARNING

San Jose, Cal., June 28, 1905.

I wish to sound a note of warning to our people nigh and afar off. An effort is being made by those at the head of the medical work in Battle Creek to get control of property over which, in the sight of the heavenly courts, they have no rightful control. I write now to guard ministers and lay members from being misled by those who are making these efforts. *There is a deceptive working going on to obtain property in an underhand way....* I will mention no names. But there are doctors and ministers who have been

influenced by the hypnotism exercised by the father of lies.⁴⁰

That would have been startling enough, but her next paragraph leaves one's jaw hanging open in astonishment.

I have sent warnings to many physicians and ministers, and now I must warn all our churches to *beware of men who are being sent out to do the work of spies in our conferences and churches....* I can not specify all now, but I say to our churches, Beware of the representations coming from Battle Creek.... *Powerful agencies have been stealthily working there to sow the seeds of evil.*⁴¹

"*Spies.*" "*Powerful agencies.*" "*Beware.*" In church circles one just doesn't hear that kind of language—ever. In the collegial atmosphere of the typical church committee, where even the brashest of issues are usually expressed as mildly as possible, her language is about as subtle as a midnight scream. Something unbelievably bad was happening: someone (or something) was trying to get control of Adventism.

It was happening from within. Men pretending to believe in Adventism were in fact bent on changing it, and she disclosed that in words containing very little varnish.

"There are men who teach the truth, but who are not perfecting their ways before God, *who are trying to conceal their defections, and encourage an estrangement from God.*"⁴²

The picture is chilling. These people would pretend to be something they were not. This was not a casual misunderstanding. Here was a group actively trying to "conceal their defections" while working vigorously to attract followers. And Ellen White gives us a hint of the

⁴⁰ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 30. (Italics supplied.)

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, Pp. 30, 31. (Emphases supplied.)

⁴² *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 11, P. 6. (Italics supplied.)

tactics that would be used: "*Creeping in unawares, they will use flattering words and make skillful misrepresentations with seductive tact.*"⁴³

It would be tempting to dismiss her statement with an it-could-never-happen shake of the head. But history proves otherwise. In fact her predictions came tragically true. At Battle Creek, deeply laid plots were put into motion that for a time were known only to the conspirators and to the messenger of God, who saw their meetings in visions of the night. By 1905 their plans had nearly reached maturity: Battle Creek Sanitarium was being pulled inexorably from the mainstream of Adventism, and meanwhile Kellogg and his associates had undertaken an intense campaign to get Eld. Daniells (who supported Ellen White) turned out of the General Conference leadership.

This was not just a mild disagreement. This was for keeps. If the forces of change could do so, they would seize political control.

The Seventh-day Adventist Church was organized as a democratic system. Local churches elected officers by majority vote. Periodically they also selected delegates to constituency meetings, to represent their church in electing conference leadership. Local conferences, in turn, sent representatives to elect union conference officers. And when the General Conference met in formal session, the same democratic process was employed to select world leadership.

It was a workable system, similar to democratic organizations throughout the world, but it shared with them a common risk: it was not immune from manipulation by those who were skilled at politics. That, in turn, left the church vulnerable to those who might have an agenda at odds with Adventism, and who decided to change things by using the political process.

It is a rule of politics that a well-prepared minority

⁴³ Ellen G. White manuscript 94, 1903. (Emphases supplied.)

can often manipulate an unorganized (and unprepared) majority. Someone puts a motion or nominates a person to office; immediately someone else rises with an enthusiastic endorsement of the idea. Another joins, and still another, from different places in the group, until it seems that the proposal has a groundswell of support from all over the audience. Unless the unsuspecting majority knows the agenda behind all this activity, sheer momentum can bring it to a successful vote.

For those who wished to change Adventism, the route thus seemed obvious: use the political process to try to gain administrative control of the denomination. Where possible, those resistant to change would be deftly shuttled aside. When vacancies in leadership occurred, people favorable to change would be urged for those positions. Once in office, these new leaders could at leisure introduce changes for which the majority would never have knowingly voted. In the areas they controlled, the church would begin to reflect their point-of-view.

This in turn led to wider possibilities. Having gotten a toehold in the structure of the church, Kellogg's forces could begin to network, voting each other into positions of influence in other church committees: school boards, hospital boards, college boards, conference committees. Patiently and stealthily, his forces could consolidate their power.

Far fetched? In 1906 Mrs. White wrote a letter to G. C. Tenney in which she described a conspiracy where men were "linked together to support one another."⁴⁴ And in his excellent booklet, *One Hundred and One Questions on the Sanctuary and Ellen White*, Eld. Robert W. Olson puts it this way: "The sanitarium was moving away from any denominational emphasis, the publishing house had become largely a commercial enterprise, and *a few key men were exercising undue control over the church through interlocking directorates.* (p. 46, *emphases supplied.*)

⁴⁴ Letter, Ellen G. White, G. C. Tenney, June 29, 1906.

Put a plan like that into operation, and, humanly speaking, it would be only a matter of time until their agenda would dominate the church—unless, of course, the majority awoke while it was still a majority.

Such was the nightmare scenario that could stop the progress of the church, absorbing all its energies in internal discord. And wherever it happened, the church would cease to be productive. At the local level, a church subject to this sort of intrigue would begin to develop the classic signs of a church in trouble. On an institutional level the effects would be similar. Though Adventist in name, the institution would become more and more dysfunctional, projecting an image increasingly at odds with the ideals of Adventism.

And there is every indication that as early as 1903 something like this was underway at Battle Creek. At The Dime Tabernacle, for example, bewildering conflicts began to develop. Political factions favoring the Sanitarium struggled for control. Unkind rumors began to circulate. Old friendships suffered. The Tabernacle indeed developed the symptoms of a church in trouble. Meanwhile, Battle Creek Sanitarium itself drifted further and further from the church and from Adventist ideals.

There were signs that Dr. Kellogg had a grander idea still, that of trying to unseat the leadership of the General Conference. From 1901 to 1903 there was no formal General Conference presidency; instead there was a committee of twenty-five persons who chose a "chairman." In many ways it was an excellent idea, but it contained a vulnerability readily visible to anyone with a political game to play: the leader of the world church was no longer selected by the General Conference acting in formal session; he was instead appointed by twenty-four other people on the committee. Control thirteen of them, and you could put anyone you wished in office.

Kellogg was not known for missing such opportunities, and 1903 proved to be no exception. He began an intense campaign to have A. G. Daniells

removed from General Conference leadership, and though his plan ultimately failed, the doctor did recruit a coalition of powerful, articulate men who supported his theology and who were determined to see his views promulgated to the church in the widest possible way. They were "men of prominence," as Daniells would later describe them—ministers, physicians, and educators who "openly took their position in favor of the book and of its teachings."⁴⁵

Those who followed the new theology seemed to adopt a mood of aggressive evangelism that could rapidly turn to belligerence if thwarted. One evening Elder Daniells was walking home from an Autumn Council meeting of the General Conference Committee. It was October of 1903; the matter of Kellogg's book (now in circulation, against denominational advice) had become an intense, emotional controversy in the church. Beneath a glowing streetlamp, Daniells stopped to talk for a few minutes with a worker who believed Kellogg's views and who was doing "all in his power" to circulate the book. The two men chatted for awhile, no doubt trying to convert each other, when suddenly the worker's disposition turned sour. "You are making the mistake of your life," he fumed, adding a threat filled with overtones of political machinery already in motion: "After all this turmoil, some of these days you will wake up to find yourself rolled in the dust, and another will be leading the forces."

"I do not believe your prophecy," Daniells replied, and then he blurted an afterthought, in the language of a man who has just glimpsed something more important than his own career. "At any rate, I would rather be rolled in the dust doing what I believe in my soul to be right than to walk with princes, doing what my conscience tells me is wrong." He then turned toward his front door to salvage what rest he could from the

⁴⁵ A. G. Daniells, *The Abiding Gift of Prophecy* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Publishing Assn., 1936), p. 336.

troubled night, no doubt musing on the strange behavioral changes that accompanied his friends' forays into this new theology.⁴⁶

III

That, if one stopped to think about it, was one of the greatest dangers that now faced the church. In the last analysis, the message of Adventism had always included behavior. Fear God and give glory to Him. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Blessed are they that *do* His commandments. To him that overcometh.

To him that overcometh. Adventism was not business as usual—not even Christian business as usual, with its stunning public failures: the Crusades, the Inquisition, the mistreatment of Jews, the broken treaties with Native Americans, signed by people who sang about salvation every Sunday. Adventism *had* to be different. It declared that sometime soon a living generation would see the face of God, and it believed that one day in the near future, Adventists would have to witness, under great stress, to a world that could not see any reason for the seventh-day Sabbath.

"The court will come to order; People versus John Q. Adventist; you are charged with a violation of Penal Code Section 1258(a)(2), failure to report for work on Saturday, and Section (a)(3), failure to be present in divine services on the Lord's Day. How do you plead?"

At that moment, there would only be one basis for a plea of *not guilty*: an abiding personal conviction that the law of God can be kept. (How, in a crowded and cynical courtroom, would it sound if John Q. Adventist replied, "Not guilty, your honor, on the basis of the law of God *which I cannot keep*?") If someone really wanted to neutralize Adventism, leaving it without a mission or a message for the end-time, one of the best possible

⁴⁶ Daniells, *op. cit.*, pp. 336, 337.

methods would be to confuse Adventists about whether the law of God can be kept by those who preach it.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that *keep the commandments of God*."⁴⁷ There was nothing comfortable in the Advent message for people who only wanted to accept Christianity halfway. Adventism carried the concept of victory further than any other Christian faith, and for very good reason: Adventists had the Sanctuary message, with its note of end-time urgency.

"Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in the sight of a holy God without a mediator. Their robes must be spotless, their characters must be purified from sin by the blood of sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil. While the investigative judgment is going forward in heaven, while the sins of penitent believers are being removed from the sanctuary, there is to be a special work of purification, of putting away of sin, among God's people upon earth."⁴⁸

In rediscovering the sanctuary truth, Adventism had taken believers further than they had ever gone before, into the very heart of heaven, to a room where dazzling light hovered over a place called the mercy seat, and where, in the Ark of the Covenant, one found an eternal constant called the law of God. In this place the final act in the plan of salvation was now in progress. Throughout history people had *claimed* to be redeemed; now the records of their lives were revealing whether they really had *meant* it.

The final judgment was in progress, and for those living during that event, life posed an unprecedented challenge: sometime soon, a generation of people would

⁴⁷ Revelation 14:12. (Italics supplied.) See also Revelation 12:17.

⁴⁸ Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1888), p. 425.

be living when the judgment concluded and probation closed. For them, there would be no option of death-bed conversions; these people would have to be ready to meet God alive, and Jesus Himself had warned that on that day most people would be unprepared—so unprepared that they would rather be buried beneath an avalanche than to see His face.

But for that time of challenge, Adventism had an answer, in the final sanctuary ministry of Christ. Here the prayers of Jesus for His people would be mingled with the mighty energy of the Holy Spirit. From the sanctuary came not only end-time challenges, but unprecedented power to do God's work.

And that was why it was so utterly vital that they do His work in His way.

This was Adventism's unique contribution to Christian theology, a final message that put the capstone on the Reformation. For centuries Christians had believed that salvation comes through faith in Jesus. Fully accepting this, Adventists drew from the Scriptures a new dimension that plumbed the depths of faith: through faith in Christ the entire life could be drawn into harmony with the Divine law. "*Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must be conquerors in the battle with evil.*"⁴⁹ All of this was said with a sense of urgency, as though one's time in which to accomplish it might be very short. "We are preparing to meet Him who, escorted by a retinue of holy angels, is to appear in the clouds of heaven to give the faithful and the just the *finishing touch* of immortality. When He comes He is not to cleanse us of our sins, to remove from us the defects in our characters, or to cure us of the infirmities of our tempers and dispositions. If wrought for us at all, this work will all be accomplished before that time. When the Lord comes, those who are holy will be holy still."⁵⁰

⁴⁹ *Great Controversy*, p. 425. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁰ *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 355. (Italics supplied.)

On a summer day in 1868 Ellen White had written similar thoughts in a birthday letter to her son, in which a mother's love had blended with the unmistakable challenge of the old Advent message: "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Nothing but holiness will prepare you for heaven....The heavenly character must be acquired on earth, or it can never be acquired at all."⁵¹

There was an idealism about this faith, something beyond even the dreams of the Reformers, who had lightened the world with the reawakened message of righteousness by faith. Luther, Calvin, Knox—all had lived in the ragged ending of history's long night, each pushing back the shadows in his own way. But now the day, begun so full of promise in the Sixteenth Century, was far spent. Human history was nearly ended, and Seventh-day Adventists had a message that had never been given to the world: "Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come."⁵²

These goals could no longer be put off into some comfortably distant future, and Adventists looked into the Bible for examples of what God expected from people who might be translated to heaven without passing through the grave. "By the translation of Enoch the Lord designed to teach an important lesson," Ellen White wrote. "Men were taught that it is possible to obey the law of God; that even while living in the midst of the sinful and corrupt, they were able, by the grace of God, to resist temptation and become pure and holy...The godly character of this prophet represents the state of holiness which *must be attained* by those who shall be 'redeemed from the earth' (Revelation 14:3) at the time of Christ's second advent."⁵³

Enoch had lived upon the earth before its destruction

⁵¹ Ellen G. White, *Testimony Treasures* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1949), vol. 1, p. 245.

⁵² Revelation 14:7.

⁵³ Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1958), pp. 88, 89. (Italics supplied.)

by water, his victorious life proving that righteousness was possible. Now an even greater destruction awaited, and the world deserved one last, convincing proof that salvation could actually solve the problem of sin. The last generation of human beings would have to decide, in a short time and under very difficult world conditions, whether to obey God or perpetuate rebellion, whether to live or die. *And their single best view of the issues would be delivered through the lives of God’s people!*

Thus victorious Christian living wasn’t something that believers owed their egos; *it was something they owed their neighbors!*

“Like Enoch, they will warn the world of the Lord’s second coming and of the judgments to be visited upon transgression, and by their *holy conversation and example* they will condemn the sins of the ungodly.”⁵⁴ In 1902 Mrs. White had again reminded Adventists that “Not all the books written can serve the purpose of a holy life. Men will believe, not what the minister preaches, but what the church lives.”⁵⁵

Adventists claimed to have an end-time view into the judgment hall of heaven, where one found the standard by which Jesus was even now judging the world. They had rediscovered the law, and now they had to do something with it: they either had to live it, through the power of God, or develop the world’s best excuses for sinning.

IV

There was a growing danger that they might be tempted to choose the latter alternative, and the longer they delayed in this world, the greater the danger grew. The standard that revealed itself in the sanctuary was, after all, exceedingly high. As the Advent tarried and prosperity distracted them, even people

⁵⁴ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 89. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 21.

entrusted with the Third Angel's Message might be tempted to lower their standards, rationalizing that end-time victory just couldn't be done. Mrs. White warned of this, in terms that are difficult to misunderstand. "Let no one say, I cannot remedy my defects of character. If you come to this decision, you will certainly fail of obtaining everlasting life."⁵⁶ In the important year of 1888, she had written similar thoughts. "Through defects in the character, Satan works to gain control of the whole mind, and he knows that if these defects are cherished, he will succeed. *Therefore he is constantly seeking to deceive the followers of Christ with his fatal sophistry that it is impossible for them to overcome.*"⁵⁷

But that was the point. It *was* possible. "Let none, then, regard their defects as incurable. God will give faith and grace to overcome them."⁵⁸

So Adventists had a special mission, not just to preach the law, but to live it. Anything that challenged that message of personal victory also questioned the very rationale for the church, and therein lay the danger in Kellogg's teachings. The church and the world were plunging through deepening evening toward something called the close of probation, when the judgment would be finished and the destiny of every soul on earth fixed forever. During the fast-waning judgment hours, every individual would be examined by God "with as close and searching scrutiny as if there were not another being upon the earth."⁵⁹ It was a challenge that was impossible to overstate.

Yet Adventists were being lulled by pleasing theories about the nature of God, in which the vital sanctuary truths faded from sight and the Shekinah became nothing more than summer sunlight. Desperate to warn the

⁵⁶ Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1900), p. 331.

⁵⁷ *The Great Controversy*, p. 489. (Italics supplied.)

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *The Great Controversy*, p. 490.

church, alarmed by the bewitching power of error, Ellen White searched for some way to illustrate how easily one could mistake error for truth, and she resorted to the optical illusion of two railroad tracks, blending in the distance until they seemed to be one. “The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit.”⁶⁰

And then, seeing some of the church’s best minds caught in the trap, leading others into it with powers of eloquence that had once been devoted to the Advent message, she cried out in nearly total despair: “My soul is so greatly distressed as I see the working out of the plans of the tempter that I cannot express the agony of my mind. Is the church of God always to be confused by the devices of the accuser, when Christ’s warnings are so definite, so plain?”⁶¹

V

Even seasoned workers were being swept into a heresy they did not recognize as error, and Kellogg’s forces were enjoying spectacular success. But something even worse was coming. Toward the summer of 1904, Ellen White and A. G. Daniells were jolted when they realized that the problem was moving to a new dimension. The apostasy had broadened its goals beyond the mature workers it had already successfully recruited.

The next target would be Adventism’s youth.

⁶⁰ Ellen G. White letter 211, 1903.

⁶¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, Pp. 22, 23.

Chapter 4

“Parents, Keep Your Children Away From Battle Creek”

I

On a June day in 1904, Ellen White was at Nashville, Tennessee. It was a lovely time of year, radiant in the first bloom of early summer, with the fragrance of wildflowers drifting over the Cumberland River, and in better times she might have paused to enjoy it. She loved life and she loved nature, and in later years she would try each day to save time for a stroll through her own little orchard; but on this day in Nashville something else weighed on her mind. News had reached her that Kellogg's people had reopened Battle Creek College; that signalled a danger she recognized immediately: those who were pushing the new theology had decided to go after the young people of the church.

For those committed to revolutionary change, young people are always an attractive target. The young mind is still seeking its identity and is willing to try novel ideas, and in controlled situations such as classrooms (where, after all, one's grades are at stake), it can be subjected to persuasive pressure—especially if the instructor has charisma. Thus a revolution will typically include a strategy aimed at the young. Win the loyalties

of the youth, and sooner or later your older opposition will literally die off. You can hope to accomplish your goal by betting heavily on a new generation.

Ellen White was acutely aware of the power of youth. She had every right to know; it was, after all, a group of teenagers and young adults who had given Adventism such a dynamic beginning. Look at a roster of the pioneers, and their sheer youth is amazing: in 1842, when he began to preach, James White had just turned 21 years of age. In 1844, J. N. Andrews was 15, Ellen Harmon was 17, Annie Smith was only 16. Cyrus Farnsworth was 22 years old, and Uriah Smith was only 12. Even such pioneers as Himes and Edson were not yet out of their thirties. To be sure, such patriarchs as Captain Bates and William Miller were older, but many of the founders of Adventism were hardly more than teenagers.

So Mrs. White had a healthy respect for the raw power of young people committed to an ideal; she had been one of them when Seventh-day Adventism was born; and throughout her long life she never lost the youthful talent for dreaming great dreams. She spoke wistfully about an "army" of young people that would carry the gospel to the "whole world,"⁶² and she instantly recognized trouble when it became clear that Kellogg's forces were beginning to look with interest at the church's youth.

The first hint of that tactic was revealed when Kellogg's book came off the press. *The Living Temple* was immediately promoted and sent to local conferences just in time for the summer campmeeting season, and "energetic efforts" were made to involve the youth in circulating it for sale.⁶³ Elder Daniells noted that development with great concern. "I saw seeds being sown among the hundreds of young people in our leading institutions," he reported, something that he

⁶² Ellen G. White, *Education* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1903), p. 271.

⁶³ Daniells, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

"firmly believed would produce results heartbreaking to hundreds of our brethren."⁶⁴

Kellogg also began using young people in a political way. In November of 1903 Ellen White wrote to Elder S. N. Haskell, warning him that students were being enlisted in a letter-writing campaign to produce political pressure favorable to the Sanitarium. "At the sanitarium at Battle Creek, the students and helpers have been encouraged by the managers to write to their parents and friends and tell of the wonderful things being done in the institution," she said, and the technique was indeed clever. What mother, after all, would be inclined to believe something bad about a place when she had in hand a letter from Junior saying how much he loved it?⁶⁵

Unfortunately, things at the Sanitarium were far from wonderful, a reality that Mrs. White had repeatedly been shown, and now Kellogg was compounding the problem by reopening Battle Creek College.

Back in 1901 the college at Battle Creek had been closed and the school moved to new quarters at Berrien Springs, where it would be sheltered by distance from the growing problems around the Sanitarium. The only classes taught in Battle Creek thereafter were medically related. The charter for the college had not expired, however, leaving it possible to reopen the campus, and now Kellogg seized on this technicality as a way to reach more young people. He reopened the school, saying that it was necessary for reasons related to accreditation of the medical school.

Next, recruiting material was prepared to be sent to young people, urging upon them the advantages of studying at Battle Creek. Teams of recruiters took to the field, itinerating during the campmeeting season. Grandiose plans for the new institution were laid, and the youth were courted with promises of "great

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Letter, Ellen G. White to S. N. Haskell, Nov. 28, 1903.

advantages" in this reopened Battle Creek College—not a bad recruiting plan, altogether, and students began to sign up.⁶⁶

It was this that occasioned Ellen White's warning, written from Nashville on a June day in 1904. Under no circumstances send your children to Battle Creek, she admonished parents. To do so could risk the loss of their souls.

"When I first heard of the reopening of Battle Creek College, I was in great distress; for I knew that this, if managed as some desired, would call many young people there...

"How could we consent to have the flower of our youth called to Battle Creek to receive their education, when God has given warning after warning that they are not to gather there?"⁶⁷

II

What, exactly, was the problem with the school?

For one thing, Battle Creek itself was roiling with strife, hardly the sort of atmosphere to which a young person should needlessly be exposed. But there was a deeper reason, connected specifically with the college itself. At Battle Creek College, there were administrators and faculty who were simply not grounded in Adventism. Some of them "hated" the Spirit of Prophecy. Given a chance, they would "leaven" the minds of young people with doubt about the Advent message.

"Some who stand there as leaders and teachers do not understand the real groundwork of our faith," she said. "I have been instructed that there are in Battle Creek men who...have rejected light...Unless these men are converted, they will become Satan's decoys, to lead souls away from the truth....they will work to undermine the confidence of those in whose minds they can plant the

⁶⁶ Daniells, *op. cit.*, p. 341

⁶⁷ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 33.

seeds of doubt and questioning. *They hate the Testimonies of reproof sent them*, and refuse to follow the light given by God..."⁶⁸

Not surprisingly, many graduates left the institution with hardly a clue as to what it really meant to be an Adventist. "Many of those who have been educated in Battle Creek need to learn the first principles of present truth....God forbid that one word of encouragement should be spoken to call our youth to a place where they will be leavened by misrepresentations and falsehoods regarding the testimonies, and the work and character of the ministers of God."⁶⁹

That, like her astonishing warning about "spies," is not the sort of language one usually hears in church communications. It is a cry of desperation, and the depth of her despair can be sensed from something she said a few sentences later: "My message will become more and more pointed, as was the message of John the Baptist, *even though it cost me my life*. The people shall not be deceived."⁷⁰

Ellen White has sometimes been unkindly accused of stifling the young with too much spiritual advice—a criticism which ignores the fact that she was herself a teenager when she helped to start Adventism. But far from stifling young people, in 1904 she was ready to *die* for them.

Her statements about education are just plain blunt. But before one sits in academic judgment on her, from the safe vantage point of an armchair, it is well to put some things in perspective. There is nothing in this world that comes close in importance to the value of one's child. The car, the boat, the big-screen TV, even the pension fund—nothing comes anywhere near the worth of a human being that you've watched grow up.

⁶⁸ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, pp. 33, 34. (Emphases supplied.)

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 34.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 34. (Italics supplied.)

When a young person goes to college, he or she will be under the influence of the new environment during the most critically important years of life—formative years, in which decisions are made that will affect life work, personal success, marriage, and, yes, eternal life. It has been said that there are two times in life when a person can be significantly molded: in early childhood, and in the college years. When parents send a son or daughter to college, it is the highest trust one can repose in anything or anybody—period.

The goal of an Adventist college or university should not be just to perpetuate itself. Its goal should be to produce graduates who are productive and successful in this life while getting themselves and others ready for heaven. And when a campus ceases to fulfill that function, it has lost all reason for its existence.

Yet Kellogg's forces reopened Battle Creek College, closed after the denomination moved the school to Berrien Springs, and now this newly opened campus was "leavened" with confusion over what it really meant to be an Adventist. False doctrine was mingling with Adventism in such a way that even basic Adventist terms were being given new definitions. In this setting, young people would be exposed to the new theology in its most attractively disguised package.

This was a challenge that brought from Mrs. White one of the frankest warnings ever given to parents. "How could we consent to have the flower of our youth called to Battle Creek to receive their education," she cried out. Some of the instructors "do not understand the real groundwork of our faith....God forbid that one word of encouragement should be spoken to call our youth to a place where they will be leavened by misrepresentations...."⁷¹

It is interesting to note the problems that led her to urge people not to send their children to a particular

⁷¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, pp. 21, 22.

campus. Instructors who themselves did "not understand" basic Adventism. Students who graduated without knowing the "first principles" of our faith. "Misrepresentations and falsehoods" related to the Spirit of prophecy and the ministry of the church. At Battle Creek College, she warned, the youth would be led to doubt some of the most distinctive identities of Adventism.

There was a growing possibility that they would be exposed to another danger as well—plain, unvarnished immorality. One Adventist moral scandal was reported on the front page of the newspaper, and at least one overwrought new theologian taught something he called "spiritual affinity," in which he suggested that one's wife in heaven might be a different person than his wife on earth. The immediate results of such teaching are best left to the imagination.

One of the church leaders of the time would later recall that "there were confusing ideas of free love," and there were "immoral practices" by some of those who presented the new theology. And then, seeming to blush right onto the printed page, he added, "The details of that chapter of shame should not now be told, but those who knew the facts understood the truth of these words:

"Panthestic theories are not sustained by the Word of God....Darkness is their element, sensuality their sphere. They gratify the natural heart, and give leeway to inclination."⁷²

"By their fruits ye shall know them," Jesus had once said. Even if error were so cleverly packaged as to lead one to temporary confusion, there was a test that could be applied to the *results* of a teaching: what were its effects on one's behavior? In 1903 it appears that the

⁷² L. H. Christian, *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1947), pp. 291, 291, quoting Ellen G. White in *Review and Herald*, January 21, 1904, p. 9. If one cares to explore this sorry story further, some data can be found in White Estate File 236. It is also alluded to in L.E. Froom's book, *Movement of Destiny*, pp. 526-530.

ultimate effect of the new theology was—among other problems—careless morals. Small wonder, then, that Ellen White was concerned about an aggressive program to call young people to such a place.

The battle had moved to new terrain. But this time more than an institution was at stake. The pawns in the power struggle were now the most precious treasure that Adventist parents had in this world, and the effects soon began to be felt. Anguished letters began arriving on Ellen White's desk from parents who had sent their young people to Battle Creek only to see them give up their faith, and these sad tales began as early as 1906: "One father writes that of his two children who were sent to Battle Creek, one is now an infidel and the other has given up the truth.

"Letters such as this have been coming *from different ones*."⁷³

"Who is responsible for giving young men and women an education that has left a seducing influence upon their minds?" she cried out in rhetorical despair. "Parents, *keep your children away from Battle Creek....If your children are in Battle Creek, call them away without delay*."⁷⁴

III

The saddest irony of all was that God had given His church such a clear plan for education. Like His advice regarding health care, it ran contrary to conventional thinking and to institutional vanity, but it would, if followed, prevent many problems that might otherwise endanger the church.

One such principle was to keep educational institutions small. "No arrangements should be made to gather a large number of students at any one place. For just as surely as this is done, the stamp of the educator's

⁷³ Ellen G. White manuscript 20, 1906. (Italics supplied.)

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

mold will be imparted to the students' minds and characters. If the mind of the teacher is radical, or if it is not complete....the students will show the defective stamp."⁷⁵

Think about it, and the idea makes sense: concentrate too many people under the influence of one person or institution, and you gamble everything on the spirituality of whomever is in charge. Like our health care institutions, our schools were to be small, rural campuses where students could be in touch with nature, and where a part of their educational time could be spent in physical work. Ellen White often spoke of the need to educate the whole person, balancing strong mental effort with physical activity that would develop both the body and the mind. In a way that some today might find embarrassingly Victorian, she even urged against competitive sports, explaining that one's physical needs could better be met while learning some useful physical trade.

Perhaps few of her ideas are less appreciated by students than this one. Sports are a major part of American life today, and one would far rather see youngsters shooting baskets than shooting each other. But in an Adventist academic setting, are there any reasons for her statement that might still be relevant?

I can think of a couple. First, in any sports competition there are—by definition—winners and losers. (If someone wins someone also has to lose!) That is absolutely opposite to the way salvation works. To be saved, you compete with no one. Indeed, you try to help others win, too. In the plan of salvation, no one has to lose.

Now compare competitive sports. Try your best to achieve a goal, and it is someone's job to try to block you; no hard feelings, but that is just how the game is played. Competitive sports are generally a form of acted-

⁷⁵ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 35.

out combat (as are most video games!) Could this instill in the young mind the idea that this is how we ought to play the game of life? If so, it gives our young people a very powerful lesson that they will have to unlearn before they can really reveal Christ.

For the occasional legendary basketball star, who comes up through Adventist schools only to achieve fame in professional sports, Ellen White's advice about learning a secondary trade may not be economically necessary; but for the average student, who is not besieged with major league ball club recruiters, there just may be some good advice buried in this "Victorian" rhetoric. In today's economy, nearly all young Adventists might find it very nice to have an alternate trade they could fall back on—particularly when the streets are full of fellow graduates vying for a shrinking pool of white collar jobs. Her advice, if followed, would at least give every young person the same useful back-up that the apostle Paul occasionally had to use—another skill that one can sell, if necessary, in the market place.

But more than anything, she saw Adventist education as a training ground for evangelists—medical evangelists, educational evangelists, business evangelists—yes, even business evangelists; *especially* business evangelists. The business world is where most lay Adventists would earn their livings and meet those who didn't know about the Third Angel's Message. Of all groups, they needed especially to live their faith. It was one thing to make pious professions, but if deeds didn't match words, that paradox would be noticed in the business world quicker than anywhere. Anyone could proclaim his beliefs, but if people in the business world dreaded to see him coming, knowing that his promises were unreliable, he could do more damage than ten evangelists could undo. "There is need of businessmen who will weave the grand principles of truth into all their transactions. And their talents should be perfected *by most thorough study and training*....Of Daniel we learn that in all his business transactions, when subjected to the closest scrutiny, not

one fault or error could be found. He was a sample of what every businessman may be."⁷⁶

Ellen White expected much from Adventist young people, and well she might. Better than most, she knew what youth could accomplish. In 1844, when professed Christians scoffed at the coming of Christ (and celebrated jubilantly after the disappointment), a handful of young people had held on with dogged conviction, to become the nucleus of Seventh-day Adventism. She never lost her youthful dream of grand ideals accomplished in a grand way. Give them a chance, she said, and Adventist young people could finish the work of God.

But to do that, they would need the best education in the world. They would not find this in secular colleges, she warned, where faith was often undermined by skepticism. For Adventist young people, only the best was good enough: campuses where the Advent message was proclaimed with clarity and conviction.

Of course there was a danger. If, on Adventist campuses, students were ever exposed to doubt and cynicism, if the prophetic message of the church were ever challenged in Adventist academia, the potential for disaster could be beyond calculation. It could cost the loss of a generation of young people. At its worst, it could challenge the survival of the church. For that reason, Mrs. White warned that the choice of teachers for our schools was a heavy responsibility, and she especially cautioned against hiring teachers who did not believe the sanctuary truth:

"Any man who seeks to present theories which would lead us from the light that has come to us on the ministration in the heavenly sanctuary, *should not be accepted as a teacher.*"⁷⁷

⁷⁶ Ellen G. White, *Messages to Young People* (Nashville, Tenn: Southern Publishing Assn., 1930), p. 222. (Italics supplied.)

⁷⁷ Ellen G. White manuscript 125, 1907; Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982) p. 199. (Italics supplied.)

As the battle raged in 1905, Mrs. White seems to have felt the ordeal so intensely that she began to wonder if she would live through it. In November of that year she wrote from her home at Elmshaven. She had been having trouble sleeping as she pondered the apostasy under way at the heart of Adventism, and in this testimony she gave a hint that the stress might be catching up with her. "I write this because any moment my life may be ended. Unless there is a breaking away from the influence that Satan has prepared...souls will perish in their delusion." And then she turned her concerns to education. "All this higher education that is being planned will be extinguished; for it is spurious. The more simple the education of our workers, the less connection they have with the men whom God is not leading, the more will be accomplished. Work will be done in the simplicity of true godliness, and the old, old times will be back when, under the Holy Spirit's guidance, thousands were converted in a day."⁷⁸

IV

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."⁷⁹

As Adventists, we differ from our Catholic neighbors in many ways. The change of the Sabbath, the persecutions of the Middle Ages, veneration of Mary, even the intrusion into the sanctuary ministry of Christ with priestly confessions—all of this runs decidedly contrary to Adventist beliefs.

But once in awhile, the stones cry out.

For seven years of my educational life I was a student on a Roman Catholic campus, in the course of which I earned three post-graduate degrees and—perhaps ironically—an academic award in constitutional law from a Roman Catholic Bishop. During that time I came to

⁷⁸ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 63.

⁷⁹ Luke 19:40.

know the Catholic faith well. And I might as well admit it: I learned to love the Catholic people. Every month I still read several Catholic publications. At the invitation of Malachi Martin, I joined a group that receives a monthly briefing from Rome, because I want to know what my Catholic friends are thinking. The story I am about to share with you I first saw in the October, 1993 issue of *Crisis*, a Catholic magazine that I highly recommend for anyone who really wants to understand what conservative Catholics are saying today.

Franciscan University is a Catholic campus in Steubenville, Ohio. A few years ago it was facing the sort of problems faced by many religious campuses. It was suffering financially. Enrollment was down to 1,033. Religious interest among its students was waning; one day the president received a memo from the dean of students suggesting that they abolish Sunday morning services because no one was bothering to get up for them. The campus was in such sad shape that when the board of trustees began searching for a new president, the first three candidates actually recommended shutting the institution down.

Finally the search committee turned to a Catholic priest by the name of Michael Scanlan, who openly told them that if selected as president, he would make the institution "stand for Christian and Catholic values." When he was invited to become president, he went before the entire board of trustees to tell them that he intended to accomplish a spiritual revolution, "leading a clear commitment to Jesus Christ as the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

His arrival was stormy. He was greeted by a demand from the students for totally open dorms. The dean of student affairs advised him that the only way to change campus behavior was "to eject every current student and start over." As he began to monitor faculty performance, insisting that it be true to Catholic values, some of his junior faculty members called a faculty meeting to seek a vote of no confidence in the president.

One of the reforms he instituted is interesting. *He terminated all intercollegiate athletics.*

Why?

Because, in his words, he wanted “*to clarify the school's principles*”!

That reform cost him angry calls from many alumni.

At this point, the story can be told most eloquently in President Scanlan's words:

“I found prayer to be my greatest resource....I prayed fervently for God's help, especially when I was in desperate need, including financial need. Some mornings I would stay in prayer for three to four hours asking the Lord what to do, before going to the office.

“*Why go to the office when you don't know what to do?*”

In *Selected Messages*, Ellen White makes a statement that seems to fit here with compelling force. It can be found in Book III, p. 386:

“God has children, many of them, in the Protestant churches, and *a large number in the Catholic churches*, who are more true to obey the light and to do the very best of their knowledge than a large number among Sabbathkeeping Adventists who do not walk in the light.” (Italics supplied.)

Today, Franciscan University is a very different place. Enrollment has nearly tripled. Recently they had the largest entering class and the largest total enrollment in their history. “Our chapel is filled twice each day for Mass,” Scanlan writes. “We have added five chapels on campus to serve the increasing number of students who make daily prayer a priority. Our 12 priests...are overrun with requests for the sacrament of reconciliation.”⁸⁰

⁸⁰ I am well aware that this campus is both Catholic and charismatic. But even though one may not agree with their theology, their spectacular turn-around and subsequent success prove that many students can be attracted to a campus that actually practices the conservative ideals it claims to believe in.

How did that transformation take place? Because a university president took a stand for the ideals his campus was supposed to promote. Often he is asked by visitors for the secret of his school's success. His reply: "Where is your president? What are his priorities and values? That is where it all begins."

For those who would like to duplicate his experience on other Catholic campuses, he has some advice.

1. Don't compromise with standards. Make the school's entire program "overtly Catholic and Christian."
2. Be sure the school's curriculum is "based on Catholic truths." If a Catholic school doesn't stand for Catholic principles, Scanlan says, "we shouldn't call it *Catholic*."
3. Hire and terminate faculty based not just on their academic credentials, but on "their support for the school's mission."
4. Give students an environment so clearly religious that wrongdoing seems out of place. When confronted with the demand for open dorms, he instead organized the dormitories into "faith households," and personally took over the duty of being campus pastor. Today, the campus's chapels are routinely packed with students during devotions.

In the same fascinating issue of *Crisis*, a companion article appeared that is well worth reading. It is entitled "Choosing a College, a parent's guide." It is written by C. John McCloskey III, chaplain of an Opus Dei center near Princeton University. He suggests some interesting tests for parents to use when selecting a college for their children. Being a priest, he frames them in Catholic terms, of course, but his ideas may have much wider generic application.

1. The very heart of a university, he says, is "a sound theology department." Is it loyal to the teachings of the church? "A college that habitually tolerates teaching that is at odds with the Church's teaching forfeits the name Catholic in any real sense."

2. Look at a list of those who have spoken on campus during the past year. Do they support one's religious ideals? "After all, why should your tuition money support the dissemination of opinion antithetical to Catholic teaching?"
3. Is there a real sense of mission on campus, preparing students not just for careers, but for a life of religious conviction?
4. What percentage of the student body really practice their faith?
5. What are the dormitories like? Try spending a night in one. Do the dormitories have the same moral tone and adult supervision "that you would wish for your child if he were living at home?" Remember, he says, that "it is your child that you may be placing at moral and physical risk."
6. Finally, "do not be fooled by those who purport to be Catholic and whose livelihood and retirement depend on protecting this fiction. Nor should you fool yourselves into thinking that you are sending a son or daughter to a Catholic institution *if it does not live up to the Church's standards*."

"Secular universities have many problems, but claiming to be Catholic is certainly not one of them."

Straight talk? Yes. But it is no more blunt than the language used by Ellen White when Adventist young people were in peril.

"Some think it strange that I write, 'Do not send your children to Battle Creek'....The young people in Battle Creek are in danger. They will come in contact with error. Years ago I did not think that they would meet these errors right in the sanitariums; but when "Living Temple" came out, and some of our ministers told me that there was in it nothing but what I had been teaching all my life, I saw how great the danger was. I saw that blindness had fallen upon some who had long known the truth. I pray that the Lord will open the eyes of these ministers, that they may see the difference between light

and darkness, between truth and error."⁸¹

"It would be far better to cease seeking to obtain an education...than to gain the best of educations, and lose sight of eternal advantages."⁸²

Yes, I know: C. John McCloskey is a Catholic priest, and we have many differences with Catholics. But as I sit at my desk, looking through the window at a rain-swept morning in California's Sierras, a statement from Ellen White comes to mind.

"There are many souls to come out of...the churches—even the Catholic Church—whose zeal will far exceed that of those who have stood in the rank and file to proclaim the truth heretofore...When the crisis is upon us, when the season of calamity shall come, they will come to the front...and exalt His law..."⁸³

And then I re-read Chaplain McCloskey's powerful article one more time, and discover something: change the word "Catholic" to "Adventist," and you have the sort of advice that could have saved parents many a heartache during an apostasy called the alpha—advice that comes from a source we never expected.

V

And he answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

⁸¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 35.

⁸² Ellen G. White, *Fundamentals of Christian Education* (Nashville, Tenn: Southern Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 350.

⁸³ *Selected Messages*, book III, pp. 386, 387.

Chapter 5

“Hypnotism is Being Used”

I

It was 1904, and everywhere one looked there was wreckage.

Only five years earlier, Adventism had faced a golden moment—a wide-open world filled with signals that Jesus wanted to come quickly. Back then, opportunity had beckoned like a spring horizon, but now the landscape was littered with the debris of battle. John Harvey Kellogg was in the process of leaving the church, taking with him its largest institution and the flower of its minds. Two great institutions had been destroyed. Even the youth were being avidly courted by forces that would, if they could, change Adventism until it was unrecognizable.

Everywhere the forces of evil seemed to be on the march, swallowing territory like a pillaging army, and perhaps one reason for their success can be found in a testimony written by Ellen White in this dismal year.

She wasted no time trying to sugar coat what she had to say. In this apostasy, she warned, powerful psychological mechanisms were being used—techniques designed to manipulate people by by-passing the conscious mind!

"Let us bear a plain, clear testimony right to the point, that *hypnotism is being used* by those who have departed from the faith, and that we are not to link up with them."⁸⁴ But worse, the technique being employed was a variant of hypnotism designed to affect people *without their conscious awareness that it was even happening*.

"Satan often finds a powerful agency for evil in the power which one human mind is capable of exerting on another human mind. *This influence is often so seductive that the person who is being molded by it is often unconscious of its power*. God has bidden me speak warning against this evil, *that His servants may not come under the deceptive power of Satan*."⁸⁵

"*Unconscious of its power*." This wasn't even the usual form of hypnosis, with a technician and a willing subject. This completely bypassed one's consent, no permission asked. If something like this was going on, it may be easier to understand why some people in Battle Creek who dallied in Kellogg's circle found themselves so entangled.

Many decades later, psychologists would discover that it is possible to manipulate people through subtle techniques that may not be consciously perceived, but which can affect the thoughts and behavior of the person upon whom they are used, and which can be surprisingly effective. In the late Twentieth Century this form of manipulation would become a growth industry, avidly sought by salesmen, therapists, new age gurus, even some health professionals—anybody who wanted to alter someone else's behavior. Is it possible that as early as 1905 Ellen White foresaw just such dangers—and that, in an early form, they were already being employed? Her writings give a fascinating insight.

⁸⁴ *Selected Messages*, Vol. 3, p. 412. (Italics supplied.)

⁸⁵ Ellen G. White letter 244, 1907; see Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1958) Vol. 2, p. 352. (Emphases supplied.)

On June 28, 1905, she wrote from San Jose, California, in terms so urgent one has to stop and listen. "I wish to sound a note of warning to our people nigh and afar off....there are *doctors and ministers* who have been influenced by the *hypnotism* exercised by the father of lies."⁸⁶ Notice that this manipulation was being successfully employed on "doctors and ministers," well-educated and normally strong-willed people, and she warned that they did not even realize their danger.

In other words, during the alpha apostasy she claimed that error was seeking access to the minds of men and women through techniques designed to bypass their conscious judgment. She even described the way this would be done: "In the very midst of us will arise false teachers, giving heed to seducing spirits whose doctrines are of satanic origin. These teachers will draw away disciples after themselves. Creeping in unawares, they will use flattering words and make skillful misrepresentations with seductive tact."⁸⁷ People would be drawn into an error so powerful that "when they once accept the bait, it seems impossible to break the spell that Satan casts over them."⁸⁸

Those who were thus entrapped would have no idea of their true condition; they would "protest at the thought that they are ensnared, and yet it is the truth."⁸⁹

That is an almost perfect description of the effect of some late Twentieth Century programming techniques and the methods by which suggestions are anchored in someone's subconscious. Was something like this happening even in 1904? It would be nice to rule that out, but if Ellen White is an authority source for the researcher, one cannot do so. In letter 237, written in 1904, she used language so clear that it cannot be

⁸⁶ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 30. (Italics supplied.)

⁸⁷ Ellen G. White manuscript 94, 1903. (Emphases supplied.)

⁸⁸ Letter, Ellen G. White to Brn. Daniells and Prescott and their associates, October 30, 1905, J. H. N. Tindall Collection.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

misunderstood: "hypnotism is being used by those who have departed from the faith."

This would all be only a bit of interesting (if peculiar) history, except for something she added. *All this would happen again*—shortly before the close of probation! Through the channels of psychology and hypnotism, she warned, Satan "works with that power which is to characterize his efforts *near the close of probation*."⁹⁰

When this problem recurred, probation would be nearing its end!

II

If manipulation of the mind is one of Satan's special tools for the end of time, it is worth spending a moment to think about it.

The human mind is wonderfully intricate, and those who study it are only beginning to understand how it governs our lives. But we do know that the mind has at least two levels. One is the conscious level, where we take in information, think about it, and make reasoned decisions. Here we evaluate objective evidence and make thoughtful judgments.

There is another level, a cavernous storehouse that is sometimes called the subconscious. There we store things we don't need to use any more—the "forgotten" telephone number, the dry facts from a history course we've completed, even unhappy memories we'd just as soon not be bothered thinking about. All our past experiences accumulate there. We may no longer be aware of them, but researchers are learning that information stored in the subconscious can affect our behavior in ways we do not even recognize.

Give that a moment's thought, and you'll realize that if you could find a way to get an idea into someone's

⁹⁰ *Signs of the Times*, November 6, 1884; *Selected Messages*, Vol. 2, P. 351. (Italics supplied.)

subconscious mind, you just might be able to manipulate his or her behavior. Bingo! You've just discovered why businesses spend billions of dollars on television advertising.

Think about the last television commercial you saw, and you'll recognize that it probably was not designed to appeal to your critical judgment. Pictures and sounds wash over you like an avalanche; every second or two scenes change, giving you no time to adapt to one scene before another is thrust at you. Camera angles change; there are laps, zooms, fades, dissolves, a rapid sequencing of scenes, each of which is crammed with still more input. In the broadcasting trade (where I worked as an announcer and newscaster for six years), these are called "technical events," and their purpose is to flood you with more information than you can consciously think about.

We know that the conscious mind can simultaneously handle only a very few items at a time. Beyond that, the mind goes into overload. It has to do something with all the data that is pouring in, and so, for want of a better place, it can dump it *directly into the subconscious*. Ideas have gotten into your mind without being filtered through your judgment. Once they are there, these ideas have the potential to affect your behavior.

Intentional overload: it is a technique used in Ericksonian hypnosis. Glut someone's conscious mind with more information than it can handle, and while it is struggling to cope, implant in the subconscious a suggestion that may alter his or her behavior.

But television at least offers you an option: you *can* turn it off. What if manipulative techniques were packaged in a way designed to affect you without your knowledge?

In recent years there has been a growth industry in pop-psychology techniques by which one person can manipulate the behavior of another. Though they employ methods that are unconventional (and sometimes a bit

odd), they can be made to work surprisingly well. They are designed to influence someone without going through the process of formal hypnosis, and they can be effective even though the person upon whom they are being used is not aware of the fact.

Some of these techniques present themselves as just enhanced conversational skills. For example, in one of these conversational ploys you adjust your language to the way you think the other person perceives the world. Some people perceive things in a visual way, sight being their dominant sense. For them, your conversational response might be, "I *see* that." Other people tend to be more auditory. In that case you would reply, "I *hear* what you are saying." If they are primarily tactile, responding to touch, you would say "I *feel* that you are correct." What you are trying to do is to build subliminal bridges with the other person, by seeming to mirror their feelings.

The how-to-do-it manuals that promote these techniques have a whole series of clandestine tests by which someone's perceptive preferences can be determined. Ask a person a question, and then watch his or her eyes to see which direction they look while searching for the answer. From this clue, one can supposedly tell whether the person is visual, kinesthetic, or auditory.

All of which may leave one with a vague uneasiness. I am not certain that I like the idea of a casual conversation being turned into a probe of my private preferences—particularly if the person at the other end has a used car to sell me. At the very least, all this suggests that if someone asks you a question and then appears to be studying your eyes, you might wonder whether he is fishing for this information.

Are these just good conversational skills? Perhaps. But they may be more than that. To the extent that they are intended to bypass a person's conscious mind, they become tools that reach straight for the subconscious.

And if one takes the time to study a little about this form of "persuasion," one learns that it can go well beyond "conversation." Indeed, it can be quite manipulative.

Some mechanisms, for example, are designed to make deeply disguised appeals to the ego, employing a subliminal form of flattery. For most of us, imitation is flattering; if we sense that someone is imitating us, we may feel drawn to them and be more open to their suggestions. Using that principle, the manipulator will, in subtle ways, send veiled signals that he is imitating the other person. He may adopt their posture or mannerisms, which is a technique called "mirroring." By becoming a mirror image of his subject, he gains their confidence. Ellen White's statement is really quite descriptive: "flattering words," "skillful misrepresentations," "seductive tact."

Other techniques employ deception. If the person you are trying to convince shows signs of resistance, there is a procedure called "fogging." You pretend to agree with him, disguising your real feelings. As he relaxes and lowers his defenses, you may intentionally overload him with data, providing such a stream of sensory input that his conscious mind cannot cope with it. Within all this information flow you embed the suggestion that you wish to anchor in his subconscious. Often, this ploy is accompanied with a casual physical touch. Notice that this is all going on while the other person is feeling in control and is utterly unaware of the mechanisms being brought to bear against him.

Manipulative? Of course. But it is used by a growing number of people who want to influence others. One might expect to encounter this sort of thing on a used car lot, but one would hardly expect to find it around a church. Yet there is evidence that at least one early form of this technique was being employed in the alpha!

Apparently, one of Kellogg's favorite ploys was to hold meetings that dragged into the late night hours. "The long night interviews which Dr. Kellogg holds are

one of his most effective means of gaining his point,” Ellen White said, and then she went on to describe something fascinatingly similar to the modern technique called “fogging:”

“His constant stream of talk confuses the minds of those he is *seeking to influence*. He misstates and misquotes words, and places those who argue with him in so false a light that their *powers of discernment are benumbed*. He takes their words, and gives them an impress which make them seem to mean *exactly the opposite* of what they said.”⁹¹

To repeat a point, “fogging” is designed to create intentional confusion. When coupled with a sensory overload that cannot be handled by the conscious mind, it may open a door directly into someone’s subconscious. What we just read from Ellen White is a good description of this modern technique. Decades before it was ever formally identified, some early variant of this manipulative tool appears to have been employed by Kellogg, with remarkable success. One night in 1904, before leaving Washington for Berrien Springs, Ellen White was shown a meeting in progress in Battle Creek. “[Dr. Kellogg] was speaking, and he was filled with enthusiasm regarding his subject....In his presentations *he cloaked the matter somewhat*, but in reality he was presenting...scientific theories which are akin to pantheism.”

She then described the “*pleased, interested countenances of those who were listening*,” and her words convey a picture of people who have been captivated by some force larger than ordinary conversation. She was “astonished to see with what enthusiasm the sophistries and deceptive theories were received.” But there was more than just pop-psychology going on here. In this very meeting, she said Satanic influences had seized control. “One by my side told me that the evil angels had taken captive the mind of the speaker.”⁹²

⁹¹ Ellen G. White letter 259, 1904. (Italics supplied.)

⁹² *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, p. 41. (Italics supplied.)

Thus she drew a linkage between the manipulative techniques employed by Dr. Kellogg, and the presence of occult forces.

"Brilliant, sparkling ideas often flash from a mind that is influenced by the great deceiver. Those who listen and acquiesce will become charmed, as Eve was charmed by the serpent's words. They cannot listen to charming philosophical speculations, and at the same time keep the word of the living God clearly in mind."⁹³

Once someone has discovered a way into the minds of people, they can be led with surprising ease into some far-off places. There is a very human tendency to follow strong leadership, particularly if the leader sparkles with charisma. Cults have done that, and so have whole nations, following leaders down into deep shadows, and it is a threat from which even God's people are not immune. Ellen White warns that there is a class who are particularly vulnerable to this tactic. "There are many who have not perfected a Christian character...and they will bring their imperfections into the church, and deny their faith, *picking up strange theories, which they will advance as truth.*"⁹⁴ (There is a point here which ought to be explored for a moment. If a false leader once senses that imperfections in the lives of his followers will bind them more closely to him, there will be a strong motivation to pursue a theology that leaves people comfortable with their errors.)

The raw power of the psychological mechanisms involved here can be sensed from something Ellen White said. "How my heart has been agonized as I have seen souls accepting the inducements held out to them to unite with those who were warring against God. When they once accept the bait *it seems impossible to break the spell that Satan casts over them.*"⁹⁵

⁹³ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 197.

⁹⁴ Ellen G. White manuscript 145, 1905. (Italics supplied.)

⁹⁵ *Battle Creek Letters*, p. 128. (Italics supplied.) Also found in J. H. N. Tindall Collection as a letter from E. G. White to Brn. Daniells and Prescott and their Associates, October 30, 1905.

So Kellogg was employing some technique that had an almost overpowering effect on other minds, and Ellen White warned that it was intertwined with supernatural forces. His persuasion was so effective that it beguiled even the brightest and best; for a time, even men such as David Paulson were convinced that Kellogg's teachings were correct. One thing that helped Kellogg was the decision to hide his true agenda behind a fog of pretended orthodoxy. The leaders of the apostasy made conscious plans to portray themselves as loyal Adventists, while fomenting ideas that would replace much basic Adventist belief.

III

But there is another way directly into a person's mind, and it may be more subtle still.

Think about the television commercials you watch, and you'll recognize that behind the highly charged video component there is a powerful soundtrack, usually employing music, often with a heavy rhythmic beat. Why is a rock music format so often used? Do advertisers think that we are all rock fans, or is there something deeper going on?

For several decades researchers have been studying the effect of music on the human mind and body, and the findings suggest that music may affect us in ways we never dreamed. Some researchers believe they have evidence that music can actually affect blood chemistry. If that is so, then something very profound is happening. Chemical changes are some of the most basic ways in which the body governs itself. If change is occurring there, music has reached very deep into the process we call life.

Moreover, it appears that a person can sense and react to music even though he or she is not even consciously aware of it. Music is able to bypass those portions of the brain where conscious thought and judgment occur, and go directly into the human organism

through a part of the brain that responds to emotion and feeling. It enters, so to speak, through a back door in the brain, thus bypassing your conscious mind. Once it is inside, however, it can have profound effects.

Some of those effects are obvious. When it employs a heavy beat, music can provoke an almost irresistible urge for body movement, the average rock concert being a prime example. Another example is the military band, which can turn 900 individuals into an organized battalion, marching in lock-step as if they were directed by a single mind. Not surprisingly, most primitive religions employ a ritual that emphasizes percussive rhythm. Listened to long enough, the steady drone of a drumbeat can become a surrogate common heartbeat, molding everyone into a single unit.

Other effects of music are less obvious. People may not know why they are so easily moved to tears when the motion picture reaches a sad point, but if they thought about it, the underlying musical score might explain a lot. It has been clinically shown that music heightens our reaction to the things about us, intensifying our emotions—which explains why, even before the motion picture industry knew how to make movies talk, they hired organists to play during the show.

Still other effects of music are downright subtle. Studies show that a heavy, repeating rhythmic beat has an effect *very similar to hypnosis*.⁹⁶

This is not surprising, when one stops to analyze it. The body is a dynamic bundle of many rhythms: heartbeat, respiration, even brain waves. Like music, we are rhythmical, and as the body senses a rhythm in its environment, it adapts to it, accepting the mood that it conveys.

With this in mind, let's analyze the structure of the typical "rock" beat, and see why it has the effect that it

⁹⁶ For an excellent discussion on the subject, see H. Lloyd Leno, "Music, How it Affects the Whole Man," *Ministry*, November, 1973.

does. In conventional music, the emphasis is on the first and third beats of each measure. When the director's baton falls and the choir begins to sing "A Mighty Fortress is Our God," the rhythm of the song is conventional and predictable. The first syllable of each measure gets emphasized: "A | *Might'-y For'-tress* | *is'our God'.*" The lyrics read normally, the way a person would say them if he or she were speaking. But in rock music, the beat is changed. Instead of emphasizing the first and third beats of each measure, it stresses the second and fourth. Sing Luther's hymn that way, and it would come out like this: "A | *Might-y' For-tress'* | *is our' God.*" Disorienting? Of course. It is vaguely reminiscent of driving over potholes in a bad road. Nothing happens when it is supposed to. And confronted by this disorientation, the body reacts in a very strange way.

My good friend Louis Torres, who served as Secretary of the Greater New York Conference before moving on to broadcast evangelism, was in the rock music industry about the time when I was in broadcasting. One of the station chains for which I did newscasting included a "Top Forty" rock music format; we were the ones who first brought the Beatles to the Hollywood Bowl. Louis played with Bill Haley and the Comets—of "Rock Around the Clock" fame—and he describes the problem of rock music better than anyone I have heard. Normally, the human body wants to move in a forward direction: that is how we get from place to place, and that is where our senses are focussed. But when confronted with the disorientation of a rock beat, the body reacts by moving—not forward, as we usually do, but *from side-to-side!* This side-to-side movement is your basic dance step. As Louis puts it, this is a "telltale sign that music has had a disorienting effect on the listener's body rhythms."⁹⁷

You may have had the experience, perhaps with some Sunday-keeping friends, of visiting a church where the

⁹⁷ See Louis Torres, "What's Wrong with Rock?" *Inside Report*, March, 1994 (Published by Amazing Facts.)

music emphasized a heavily rhythmic format. If so, you probably saw many people with their eyes closed and hands raised while the music played. You may have also noticed that they were often swaying—*from side to side!*

Perhaps at this point it is useful to ask a question. If heavily rhythmic music has a dominating effect on the mind, would it make any difference if that sort of music bore Christian lyrics? Embedded within this type of music is an inherently manipulative force. Is that an appropriate vehicle by which to convey the plan of salvation?

To answer that question, one has to ask another one: Does God ever use force? The answer is obvious. If He *had* chosen to use force, He would have done so long ago, and thus avoided the whole problem of a fallen world, with its requirement for Calvary.

All of which leads to a final question: can you do God's work using a tool He can't employ?

Long ago, Ellen White warned of a problem that would occur in gospel music shortly before Jesus comes.

"The Lord desires to have in His service order and discipline, not excitement and confusion," she said, adding that "*just before the close of probation*" there would be "shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. *And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit...*

"The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an *invention of Satan* to cover up his ingenious methods for making of none effect the...sanctifying truth for this time."

She added a thought that one might well ponder, and which resonates with deep significance for this ex-broadcaster, who well remembers how messages can sometimes be embedded in the noise of a rock concert: "A bedlam of noise shocks the senses...The powers of satanic agencies *blend with the din and noise*, to have a carnival, and *this is termed the Holy Spirit's working...*

"No encouragement should be given to this kind of worship."⁹⁸

Just before the close of probation. The words linger in the mind, filled with significance. When this problem arrives, we can know we that the end is near.

IV

Not only did Ellen White warn of techniques designed to manipulate the mind, but in the alpha she linked them with the occult, warning Adventists of that era that they had more than just human forces to fear. In this battle for the soul of Adventism, Lucifer was calling in forces from the supernatural. "Satan is using all his science in playing the game of life for human souls. *His angels are mingling with men, and instructing them in the mysteries of evil. These fallen angels will draw away disciples after them, will talk with men, and will set forth principles that are as false as can be, leading souls into paths of deception.*"⁹⁹

In addition to human enemies, Satan was calling in powers from the world of darkness. Human error and supernatural force were forming a strange fusion, in which the dividing line between the two was getting very indistinct. In clinging to error, human beings were allying themselves with the powers of evil in ways they did not even realize. Perhaps in so doing they had made their own lives channels through which Satan could introduce supernatural forces on a level not usually seen.

V

Together with the church she loved, Mrs. White was now descending into a crisis so great that she openly wondered whether she would live through it. Five precious years had passed, years of peace and

⁹⁸ *Selected Messages*, Book II, Pp. 35-37. (Italics supplied.)

⁹⁹ Ellen G. White manuscript 145, 1905. (Emphases supplied.)

plenty, and the church that should have seized the moment to proclaim its vital message was instead struggling in confusion over the most basic truths. Its greatest institution teetered on the brink of loss. The Spirit of Prophecy was under a crescendo of attack, both openly and secretly, by able minds who were connected with Battle Creek Sanitarium. Even the Tabernacle, built in part with dimes contributed by faithful members and the citizenry of Battle Creek, was the subject of a struggle for control. Meanwhile, errors were being offered as new light, in a form so subtle that they confused both college students and seasoned workers. Like a ship, the church was now moving through a treacherous, fog-bound ocean that Ellen White saw filled with icebergs.

VI

The church's moment of opportunity, so long held open, is now closing. In the Far East, tensions between Russia and Japan have broken out into war, and this war can change the world. If Japan wins, an Asian nation will demonstrate that it can defeat a European power, something that the Japanese high command will long remember. And if Russia loses, an eager firebrand named Vladimir Lenin will scream for revolution.

May turns to June, 1905. In Battle Creek, feuding and intrigue mark the continuing struggle to change Adventism. Meanwhile, half a world away, history's door of opportunity swings shut with thundering finality. In the Eastern Channel of the Korea Strait, just north of the rocky Tsushima Islands, Admiral Togo orders the Japanese fleet into a battle formation that will revolutionize modern naval warfare. Daringly, he arrays his entire fleet in a single line, crossing the "T" of the oncoming Russian Baltic fleet. Every gun on his ships can now be brought to bear on the hapless Russians, and when he unleashes his thunder, the Russian fleet is blown out of existence.

It is a stunning victory that will be remembered thirty-five years later as Japan careens toward war with the United States. Russia surrenders southern Manchuria; Japan, her might unchallenged, occupies Korea. Like one of Ellen White's symbolic icebergs, the world balance shudders, gives off a little avalanche of ice, and then, with irresistible power, slowly rolls inverted.

In Russia, Lenin fans the early fires of oncoming communism. In Asia, the balance of power tumbles toward a powerful, self-confident Japan. Events are now in motion that will not cease until war and revolution close much of the world, for a time, to open evangelism.

It is clear that General Lucifer has now assumed personal command of the assault that is developing against God's work. Nothing else explains the brilliance of the attack that will next occur.

It is a principle of warfare that when an enemy has suffered damage you should strike again quickly in the same place. In 1904, Kellogg's ideas have assaulted the sanctuary doctrine, leaving many people confused. If Lucifer is thinking like a general, one can expect to see the sanctuary come under a second assault.

That is exactly what he does next, and his method is fascinating.

Once again he chooses a prominent thought leader.

As before, he uses an Adventist.

But this time, as if wishing to cover every possible facet, he uses a well-known minister.

Chapter 6

“God Has Not Given You This Message...”

I

Albion Fox Ballenger was a born preacher, handsome despite an enormous jungle of overgrown mustachioes, and when he spoke, people usually listened. There was scarcely a conference in North America where he had not been a featured campmeeting speaker, and his book, *Power for Witnessing*, was well-known. Engaging and likeable, he occasionally wrote poetry, and he could speak with such disarming sweetness that to disbelieve him seemed almost like repudiating one's own senses.

Soon that was going to be just the problem: Ballenger had such charisma that he could sweep unthinking people into unthinking conclusions.

On March 16, 1905, Elder Daniells, of the General Conference, wrote to Elder W. C. White, who was then in California, regarding a disturbing predicament. Elder Ballenger, recently sent to England as an evangelist and mission superintendent, had begun saying some odd things about the sanctuary—ideas similar to those that had taken D. M. Canright out of the church eighteen years before. Apparently Ballenger was developing quite a following; churches in Ireland, Wales, northern

England—just about everywhere the man had been—were now in turmoil. In Birmingham and other places, some of the leading brethren were suddenly having “serious difficulty” with the “subject of the sanctuary.”¹⁰⁰ In London, Elder Eugene W. Farnsworth had been trying to hold things together, and the poor man now seemed nearly beside himself as he wrote to Daniells asking for help. In Farnsworth’s own words, quoted by Daniells in his letter to White:

“Brother Ballenger has got into a condition of mind which would seem to me to unfit him entirely to preach the message. He has been studying the subject of the sanctuary a good deal lately, and he comes to the conclusion...that when He [Christ] ascended He went immediately into the Most Holy Place and that His ministry has been carried on there ever since. He takes such texts as Hebrews 6:19 and compares them with twenty-five or thirty expressions of the same character in the Old Testament where he claims that in every instance the term “within the veil” signifies the Most Holy Place...

“He sees clearly that his view cannot be made to harmonize with the testimonies,” Farnsworth said, adding that between Ballenger and Ellen White there was an “irreconcilable difference” apparent even to Ballenger himself.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Letter, A. G. Daniells to W. C. White, March 16, 1905.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, italics supplied. Ballenger argued that Hebrews 6:19, 20 describe Jesus entering “within the veil,” and that since there was a veil between the holy and most holy places, this must mean that He went directly to the holy of holies at His ascension. His argument ignores Hebrews 9:3, which makes it clear that there are *two* veils in the sanctuary, one of which was at the outer door of the holy place. It also ignores the powerful clarity of Daniel 7, which we will get to momentarily. Finally, it ignores the fact that God has been pictured in the Bible in places other than the most holy place. In Ezekiel 10, God’s throne appears for a time in the holy place rather than the holy of holies, and Ezekiel 9 describes “the glory of the God of Israel” leaving the cheruhs and lingering at the “threshold of the house.” Ballenger seems to have missed the point that God’s throne can—and does—move around!

It is worth stopping a moment to understand what Ballenger was saying. He contended that Christ had, at His ascension, gone directly to the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, an issue that some people today might consider of little consequence. But in his era it set off alarm bells at church headquarters, and for a very specific reason: it led to a conclusion at total variance from established Adventist beliefs.

The pioneers, Ellen White included, held that at Jesus' ascension He had entered the holy place, for a very specific and necessary ministry there. They believed that in 1844 He had moved to the most holy place to begin the judgment. In claiming that Jesus had gone directly into the holy of holies, Ballenger thus bypassed Christ's holy place ministry entirely—and, by logical extension, bypassed 1844 as well. Follow his notion to its conclusion, and *nothing* happened in 1844. Christ couldn't have possibly entered the most holy place then, Ballenger insisted; He had always "been" there.

In an era when terms like "holy place" and "most holy place" are often replaced with terminology like "phases of Christ's ministry," one is entitled to ask why the subject of Christ's holy place ministry should get the church leaders of 1905 so worked up. The answer, as we shall see in this chapter, is that the issue is not a casual one. It is profound.

Ellen White and the other pioneers of the church believed that the heavenly sanctuary was exactly what the Bible *said* it was—a very real place with three distinct structures: a courtyard, a holy place, and a most holy place. As we shall see in a moment, each of those sanctuary divisions *means* something. They illustrate the whole plan of salvation. Leave one out, and you lose the clarity of the Advent message.

The courtyard depicts repentance and confession of sin. The holy place adds to this Christ's ministry of sanctification, where God's people accept His imparted righteousness, with all the behavioral changes this

implies. His holy place ministry is therefore a vital part of preparing His people for the judgment. In turn, the most holy place reveals the judgment itself, in which the lives of those claiming salvation are compared with the standard of God’s law. Thus the sanctuary illustrates a process through which every believer, in every era, has to go. Leave one element out, and the whole thing falls apart.

Like all divine illustrations, this one is striking in its clarity. Within the sanctuary truth is a point so lucid that one wonders how any mentally competent human being could miss it. If the most holy place illustrates judgment, and if Christ’s holy place ministry typifies His work in *preparing* us for judgment, then no one in his right mind should dismiss the holy place ministry as unimportant. Throw it out, and you face judgment on your own. To wish that on one’s self, a person would have to be non compos mentis. Yet in 1905, that was the effect of what Ballenger was preaching.

So each apartment of the sanctuary—heavenly as well as earthly—*means* something. Each deals with a progressive step in getting ready to meet God. Ignore one of them, leave it out, or blandly sweep it aside with convenient consensus language, and an end-time generation can find themselves without the spiritual preparation necessary for end-time issues. And in 1905, thinking Adventists were still close enough to the roots of Adventism to recognize that.

Eugene Farnsworth certainly could see it. He had been baptized in the dead of winter at Washington, New Hampshire, in a hole cut through two feet of lake ice, and he had no intention of becoming confused over something as basic as the sanctuary. Neither did Daniells. Having digested Farnsworth’s letter, he wrote to Elder White, wondering aloud how the denomination ought to handle the problem posed by Ballenger. “I shall be glad to have him get out of Great Britain,” he mused, “but what we can do with him here is more than I can say at present...It seems strange that a man who has

been in this message all his life should get switched off on such a question. The sanctuary is the central pillar of this whole movement; *you remove that, and everything tumbles.*

"Do you know this brother, and have you any counsel to give?"¹⁰²

Indeed, Elder White did know Albion Fox Ballenger, and so for that matter did Ellen White. This was not Ballenger's first misadventure at tampering with basic articles of Adventist faith. A few years before, while serving as assistant editor of the denomination's religious liberty magazine, he had gotten the idea that the church should make itself more appealing by deemphasizing its more distinctive doctrines. Well might Ellen White vividly remember the youngish-looking man with the huge mustache: on that occasion, his bad idea had been the cause of one of the most impressive visions she ever had. It entered Adventist history as the Salamanca vision.

In November of 1890, Ellen White had attended the Pennsylvania state meeting held in Salamanca, New York, just across the state line. It was wretched weather, cold rain turning to snow, and as she travelled, she caught cold. Her condition worsened at Salamanca, to the point that everyone (herself included) thought she would have to return home to recover. "Sick, tired, and nervous," she at last knelt down beside her bed one night to pray, secretly fearing she would not have the strength to get back up. "I had not uttered a word," she later recounted, "when the whole room seemed filled with a soft, silver light, and my pain and discouragement were removed."¹⁰³ Then she was taken into vision, where she saw distressing details of a mistake that was about to be made by some leaders in the church: they would propose that some of the most distinctive beliefs of Adventism be left out of the church's religious liberty journal, in order to get approval from non-Adventist readers.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

¹⁰³ Ellen G. White manuscript 44, 1890.

That alone, however, was not what made the experience so remarkable. The uniqueness of the Salamanca vision lay not in its content but in the way in which it was delivered. In the months that followed, she would periodically try to recount the vision in public. Each time, she would get a short way into her message and then find herself unable to recall any further details. For those who were listening, the experience may have been odd; may, in fact, have given them room to wonder if this woman really *did* have a vision to relate. But for the historian (and the lawyer, looking for convincing evidence) the event is a gold mine, because in trying unsuccessfully to describe the vision, she established, as a matter of public record, that she had *had* a vision—months before the event that it would turn out to accurately describe!

The visit to Salamanca occurred in November of 1890. Four months passed. In good health she completed her tour of conference meetings, even pausing to visit Virginia's beautiful Luray Caverns. The next March she was back at Battle Creek, attending a spring session of the General Conference. Late one Sabbath afternoon, Elder Olsen asked her if she planned to attend the ministers' meeting early on Sunday morning. Feeling weary, she replied that she thought she would leave the meeting to him.

That Saturday night, while Mrs. White was resting in her room, a group of church leaders went to the publishing house, entered the manager's private office, and locked the door behind them for a private meeting. One of those present was Albion Fox Ballenger, the bright, ambitious, thirty-year-old Secretary of the National Religious Liberty Association.

Behind the closed doors of Clement Eldridge's office, the men began considering an idea that Ballenger supported. At that time the church published a religious liberty journal entitled *American Sentinel*. Why not make it more popular by dropping the name *Seventh-day Adventist* from the masthead? Why not take the idea

one step further, and remove all references to distinctive doctrines such as the Sabbath? By making the journal seem non-denominational, “the great men of the world would patronize it.” Around the circle, faces brightened with enthusiasm. The group “began to work on a policy plan to make the *Sentinel* a popular success.”¹⁰⁴

The men had met unknown to Ellen White. Now, unknown to them, something else happened that strange night. About 3 A.M. Mrs. White was awakened—by an angel, she later recounted, who instructed her to attend the ministers’ meeting that morning for a very special purpose: *she must reveal the Salamanca vision*. Never before had she been able to describe its details publicly. This time she would give them with graphic clarity, because the vision she had been given so long ago in Salamanca turned out to reveal in detail the events of the meeting held in Eldridge’s office the night before!

At 5:30 the next morning the ministers and workers assembled, among them Ballenger and his compatriots. Not expecting to see Ellen White, they had begun their meeting when suddenly she strode in, a bundle of manuscripts under her arm. “Why Sister White,” Elder Olsen exclaimed, “do you have a message for us?”¹⁰⁵

“Indeed I do,” she replied. “When I was at Salamanca, the Lord showed me a meeting at Battle Creek.”¹⁰⁶ And then, with meticulous detail, she described the ideas that had been discussed the previous night, along with the attitudes of those who had been present.

In modern vernacular, Albion Fox Ballenger came unglued. In tears and “deeply affected,” he rose to his feet and said, “I was in that council meeting which was held last night until a late hour, and Sister White has described it accurately. The very words she says she

¹⁰⁴ Ellen G. White manuscript 29a, 1890.

¹⁰⁵ Author’s notes, personal interview with Grace Jacques, granddaughter of Ellen White, who related the story as she had heard it in the White household.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

heard spoken were spoken last night. I was on the wrong side of the question..."¹⁰⁷

The drama of the moment now took a new turn. Until that moment, Mrs. White apparently had herself not known that the meeting seen by her in vision had occurred the very night before. As Ballenger revealed that fact, she looked at him in astonishment. One of those present later recounted, "I shall never forget the look of perplexity on the face of the dear woman, as she looked at Brother Ballenger and exclaimed, 'Last night!'"¹⁰⁸

Ballenger was not the only one to verify the accuracy of her account. Eldridge also stood. "I was in that meeting...If I should have begun to give a description of what took place, and the personal attitude of those in the room, I could not have given it as exactly and correctly as it has been given by Sister White...I acknowledge that I was wrong."¹⁰⁹

Occurrences such as this one may help to explain why so many people accepted her as a prophet of the Lord. Regrettably, they often failed to follow her counsel (an aberration we could call bizarre if we did not so often make the same mistake), but those who experienced events like the meeting at Battle Creek had seen too much of the supernatural to disbelieve her and feel really comfortable about it.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen G. White manuscript 19a, 1891.

¹⁰⁸ Arthur L. White, *Ellen G. White*, vol. 3 (Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1984), p. 480.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* I am well aware that some critics of this story maintain that W. C. White was at the secret Ballenger meeting and that he told his mother what went on, thus enabling her to "describe" the meeting the next morning. A moment's reflection discounts this argument. Both Ballenger and Eldridge were genuinely surprised to hear Mrs. White so accurately describe their discussion of the night before. Had W. C. White been present during the meeting, they would almost certainly have surmised that he was the source of her information, and would hardly have exhibited such surprise. By one account, at least, Ballenger and others were moved to tears—not the sort of reaction one would expect if there were any ready human explanation for what happened that Sunday morning in Battle Creek.

Once an Assyrian king had been told (quite possibly by General Naaman, who had personal reason to know) that there was a prophet in Israel who could reveal war counsels held in the king's most private quarters. In 1905 there was also a prophet in Israel. Repeated supernatural events disclosed that God was watching over the welfare of His work with intense personal care, yet all-too-often His advice was soon forgotten. In Battle Creek, during a moment of obvious divine intervention, Ballenger had tearfully confessed that he was wrong. Now, fourteen years later, he again found himself drifting from a message he had once acknowledged as true—and this time, he would drift too far to return.

II

The reef upon which Albion Ballenger was now going shipwreck was larger than just the matter of the sanctuary. Embedded within it was another issue: had the Lord spoken through Ellen White? And if so, could the Spirit of Prophecy be accepted as an authority source when questions of doctrine were discussed?

A church worker could, where job security demanded it, pay lip service to her as a 'fine Christian woman' whose writings 'have been a real blessing,' while secretly reserving the right to decide whether, in a doctrinal matter, she was anything more than just another devotional writer. Such hidden reservations would inevitably show up in the pulpit, because no minister could preach with conviction on a subject where he himself harbored uncertainty. But whenever that happened, Adventism faced an identity crisis. Revelation 12:17 clearly said that God's last church would be blessed with the gift of prophecy. But if the Spirit of Prophecy were so deficient that it did not even have doctrinal authority, could Adventism really claim to fulfill Revelation 12:17?

For Ballenger, who was confusing churches all over

England with respect to the sanctuary truth, that was looming as an issue he could no longer finesse, because nothing in Mrs. White's writings was plainer than her position on the sanctuary.

"The scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: 'Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.'"¹¹⁰

"The ministration of the priest throughout the year in the first apartment of the sanctuary, 'within the veil' which formed the door and separated the holy place from the outer court, represents the work of ministration upon which Christ entered *at His ascension*...For eighteen centuries this work of ministration continued, in the *first apartment* of the sanctuary."¹¹¹

Language couldn't be clearer. If Mrs. White was the messenger she claimed to be, then for 1,800 years Jesus had performed a vital ministry in the holy place. In 1844 He had "entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, to perform the closing work of the atonement, preparatory to His coming."¹¹²

That was what Ballenger now disputed, leaving churches split as a result. It is important, therefore, to ask a question: was she Biblically correct? *Was* there a two apartment sanctuary in Heaven, and had Christ entered its most holy place in 1844?

Our quest for the answer will take us to the very roots of Adventism.

III

In the autumn of 1844, over a hundred thousand people called themselves Adventists. They were an eclectic group, drawn from a whole variety of denominations—Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterian,

¹¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 409.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 420, 421. (Italics supplied.)

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 422.

Christian Connection—their attention drawn by a text from the book of Daniel: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."

That text, found in Daniel 8:14, had drawn the interest of serious Bible students for hundreds of years. As early as the Ninth Century, a noted rabbi named Nahawendi had taught that the "2,300 days" of Daniel 8:14 actually foretold 2,300 years of prophetic events. Many others had joined in that conviction, among them famed English scientist and Biblical scholar Sir Isaac Newton. In the 1840's, a professor of Hebrew at New York University openly agreed that Daniel's prophecy represented a period of 2,300 years, and declared that this period would soon end.¹¹³

Thus for centuries a wide variety of Bible scholars had agreed that the 2,300 "days" of Daniel really foretold 2,300 years of world events, and the prophecy had proved impressively accurate. Beginning with the decree of a Persian king in 457 B.C., the 2,300 year prophecy correctly foretold, to the very year, when Christ would begin His earthly ministry—and, to the very year, when He would die. Both events had happened precisely on schedule. The prophecy could thus be verified from history, and it proved with mathematical certainty that Jesus Christ had come exactly when Messiah was supposed to come. (That may also explain why Persian wise men, who probably had access to Daniel's writings, could see a new star in the western sky and clearly recognize that it heralded Messiah's birth).

But that was not all. From the starting point of 457 B.C., the 2300 year period extended deep into modern time, terminating in A.D. 1844. At that time, Daniel 8:14 predicted, something vitally important would happen: "Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall

¹¹³ Francis D. Nichol, *The Midnight Cry* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1944), pp. 460-461. Professor Bush's admission is doubly interesting, because even though he took public issue with William Miller's prediction of the Advent, he nonetheless agreed that the 2,300 year prophecy was about to reach its conclusion.

the sanctuary be cleansed.”

As 1844 approached, that text attracted renewed interest. Around the world some 2,500 preachers mistakenly came to believe that it predicted the precise time of Christ's Second Advent. Their mistake was not in expecting something to happen in 1844. The 2,300 year prophecy had already established itself as accurate; simple mathematics showed that it had to climax in 1844. Rather, their mistake was in looking for the wrong event. And they made that error because, in mid-1844, not a soul on earth seems to have understood the significance of the heavenly sanctuary.

William Miller, the impetus behind the Advent movement, studied the prophecies of Daniel for several years. Few people today realize it, but Miller actually considered the possibility that the sanctuary referred to in Daniel 8:14 might be the one in heaven. But he then dismissed that idea, and the way he reached his wrong conclusion is worth a moment of our time, because it is an error we ourselves could unwittingly repeat. Indeed, even theologians with graduate degrees have done so.

Miller got into trouble with a basic syllogism, and it goes like this:

‘Daniel 8:14 foretells the cleansing of the sanctuary.’

‘But God doesn't sin, so nothing in heaven could ever need cleansing.’

‘Therefore, the sanctuary of Daniel 8:14 could not possibly be in heaven.’

In other words, William Miller's real mistake wasn't in setting a time for the Advent. As spectacular as that error was, it was really only a symptom of something deeper. *Miller erred because he concluded that the heavenly sanctuary would never need cleansing.*

In making that mistake, Miller had set himself up for a second error. If the sanctuary described in Daniel 8:14 was not in heaven, then it must be this earth, which would be “cleansed” at the coming of Christ. That was a

common error, held by many Christians in Miller's era. He didn't invent the mistake; he just failed to correct it. *And he failed because he didn't understand the heavenly sanctuary.*

As a result, on October 22, 1844, over a hundred thousand people expected to see Jesus, and were disappointed. *"Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed."* To get the Advent message back on course, God's people would have to discover why even the temple in heaven needed cleansing. And when they did, they would have opened the door to some of the deepest theology in the whole Christian faith.

On the morning after the disappointment, only a handful of Adventists remained. Among them was an upstate New Yorker by the name of Hiram Edson, who lived on a little farm near the Erie Canal. In his farmhouse, a forlorn band of people gathered, bewildered by the disappointment yet trying to hold onto their faith, and Edson himself would later admit that he had come face-to-face with the question, "Is there no God?"¹¹⁴

In that discouraging hour he had one thing to hold to, and that was Bible prophecy. The 2,300 year prophecy could not be dismissed, even after the disappointment; you just don't throw something away that successfully predicted, to the exact year, the First Advent of Jesus. That left Edson only one option: if the prophecy were still valid, then yesterday's disappointment had to be the result of their own mistake.

But where had they gone wrong?

For the little group gathered with him, he offered some sound advice: why not pray about this, asking the Lord to give them better understanding? They retired to the empty granary of his threshing barn—empty because, expecting the Advent, he had not brought in his crop that year—and there they prayed until they felt a

¹¹⁴ *The Midnight Cry*, pp. 263, 264; see also Hiram Edson manuscript, "Life and Experience," fol. 8v and fol. 9r.

conviction that the answer to their prayer was on the way. That was enough for Edson. As soon as he felt convinced that the answer would come, he suggested that they visit nearby Adventist homes and encourage them with this news.

On October 23, 1844, there was one place an Adventist did not want to be, and that was on any public road. The countryside was filled with people who were enormously relieved at not having to see the Lord they sang about every Sunday, and their jeers could be heard anytime an Adventist walked into view. Few Adventists wanted to run that gauntlet, and Edson was no exception. To stay off the road, he and a friend started walking across his farmland, and there, in the rustling brown foliage of his autumn cornfield, he suddenly felt his mind drawn to a text in Daniel.

Adventism had been born in Daniel 8:14. *Seventh-day* Adventism was about to be born in the text that came to Hiram Edson's mind.

Over the years, people critical of Adventist theology have sometimes jibed that a cornfield was an appropriate place for what happened. So let us take a moment to look at the text and see if it really deserves the term "corny."

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire."

That scene, found in Daniel 7:9, is a view into the very heart of heaven. It describes the "Ancient of Days"—none other than God the Father—seated on a throne that is incandescent with fiery light. Around Him are myriads of shining beings, radiant with the glory of heaven. John the Revelator describes an awesome assembly ground in this place, an expanse of crystal pavement so vast it seems like an ocean, and it, too, glows like fire. *Corny?* To use such a term in this setting,

one must have a terribly high opinion of himself.

That is the text that flashed into Edson's mind that autumn morning just outside the quaint canal town of Port Gibson, New York. It reveals God the Father on His throne, but it also reveals something that would explain what happened on October 22, 1844. There is something unusual about this throne: *Daniel 7:9 describes fiery wheels on it!*

Why?

Why would the throne of God have wheels?

At the risk of overstating the obvious, there is only one reason one would put wheels on anything: to go somewhere!

At this point the Biblical scholar, full of himself (or herself), might, with a tolerant smirk, tell us that such language is Biblical metaphor and that we can't take all this too literally. To which the lay Bible student might reply, "Oh, really? Then exactly *what* should I not take literally: Heaven? God? God's throne? Or just the *wheels* on His throne? What do I believe, and what do I dismiss as metaphor?"

While considering that question, the scholar would have to deal with another problem: the Aramaic word for *wheels* that is used in Daniel 7:9 is *galgal*. It means exactly what it seems to mean: literal wheels! (The New King James version, along with other modern translations, does not even say "his wheels," as the King James does, but says "its wheels," making it even more clear that wheels belong to the throne.)

The significance should be obvious: heaven is trying to tell us something, in human terms that are so lucid we shouldn't misunderstand them. In this scene in the book of Daniel, God the Father is *going* somewhere.

But where?

And why?

Daniel 7:10 provides the answer. "A fiery stream

issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: *the judgment was set, and the books were opened.*" (Emphases supplied.)

For anyone who has ever studied comparative legal systems, that setting is unmistakable. In ancient England, some high court justices did not sit on chairs or benches. Instead they sat on large sacks stuffed with wool, which were put in place before court opened. Something very similar happened in ancient Hebrew jurisprudence: the 71 members of the Sanhedrin, when acting as a trial court, sat cross-legged on large pillows that were "cast down" for them in a semi-circle on the floor. Now Daniel sees judicial "thrones" being "cast down." Into the courtroom come the records. Millions of holy beings, waiting to do the court's bidding, stand in formal array. "The judgment was set, and the books were opened." To any lawyer who has ever tried a case, the picture is unmistakable: this is a court going into session. Judgment is about to occur.

The conclusion is inescapable. Daniel 7:9, 10—the texts that flashed into Hiram Edson's mind on October 23, 1844—describe the setting for the judgment.

But there is something incomplete about this court, and an attorney, surveying this courtroom, will instantly notice it. *Someone is missing.*

God the Father is there, resplendent in dazzling light. Numberless angels stand ready. Other officials are present (Revelation describes 24 elders seated around the throne of God). The records are open. *But there is no judge there!*

John 5:22 makes it clear that "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Acts 17:31 says that "he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness *by that man* whom he hath ordained," the same Man that God had raised "from the dead." The Father is not the judge in this trial; Jesus is.

And in Daniel 7:10, Jesus has not yet arrived.

He does arrive, three verses later, in Daniel 7:13: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man *came* with the clouds of heaven, and *came* to the Ancient of days, and they *brought* him near before him."

They brought Him near. Jesus was being *brought* into the presence of the Father, by a retinue of escorting angels. In inescapably clear terms, Daniel pictures Jesus moving from one place in heaven to another—for the specific purpose of beginning the judgment!

And that is the truth that Edson began to see on that autumn day in a farm field in western New York. In joyful (if mistaken) expectation, the Millerites had thought that Daniel 7:13 described Jesus coming on the clouds to this earth. Suddenly Edson realized the mistake. Jesus *had* gone somewhere on October 22, but His destination was not this earth; it was a very special place in heaven. One can almost hear Edson exclaim, "So *that's* why Jesus didn't come yesterday!"

IV

It all fit. The open record books. The attending angel witnesses. God the Father, moving in regal splendor into heaven's vast judgment hall. The Son, escorted by a cloud of angelic beings, entering to sit as Judge. Something was happening here, reminiscent of an event in Israel.

"And this shall be a statute for ever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all...For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from *all* your sins before the LORD."

Once a year, in accordance with Leviticus 16:29, Israel's high priest had entered the holy of holies for a special service to cleanse God's sanctuary of confessed

and forgiven sin—sin that had been transferred by faith to the Lamb of God. As we shall shortly see, sin had accumulated in the sanctuary because God Himself, in the person of Messiah, was bearing our sin. For Israel, the Day of Atonement had been a vivid illustration of a fact seldom thought about by Christians: sin doesn't magically disappear at the moment of forgiveness; its consequences live on, and Someone has to carry the load—Someone, with a capital "S," because that Someone is Jesus.

For that reason, the Day of Atonement was a solemn event in Israel. It revealed that sin is not a casual thing, carelessly indulged in because forgiveness is so available. Each sin hurt. It hurt the person wronged, and it hurt again when a wide-eyed little animal died in one's hands just to illustrate the coming Savior; and it hurt the most at a place called Calvary, where the Son of God would carry human sin to the very jaws of hell. All of this stood out in stark relief on the Day of Atonement, and so the day was a time of intense self-examination, of searching one's own heart to see if everything were right with God. Those who failed to do so were banished from Israel.

Thus the Day of Atonement was more than just a time of cleansing; it was also a day of judgment. For those who wished to be cleansed, it offered that. Israel's sins were symbolically removed from the sanctuary and placed on the head of a goat representing Satan—a clear illustration that at the end of time, Satan himself would bear into eternal destruction the forgiven sins of all the redeemed.¹¹⁵ But those who failed to participate in repentance and self examination were banished from Israel. They had chosen to hold onto sin when they might have been cleansed, and now they were separated from the people of God.

¹¹⁵ Critics of Adventism sometimes argue that this makes Adventists Devil worshippers, because we make Satan our "savior." The answer is an easy one. Your savior is whomever you give your sins to. We give them to Jesus. What He does with them thereafter is His business, not ours.

Judgment. The illustration couldn't have been clearer, and Daniel's angelic visitor couldn't have made it plainer: "*Then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.*" Israel's Day of Atonement *illustrated* something. At the end of the 2,300 years, Jesus would do what Israel's High Priest had so long acted out symbolically. He would enter the holy of holies for one last act of reconciliation, cleansing the records of all who had participated in an honest examination of their own souls. Heaven would put its seal on the redeemed. And those who had chosen to hold onto sin would be separated forever from God's people.

This was heaven's Day of Atonement. It was also judgment. And Jesus would serve as the judge.

That is the truth that would, in the coming months, be systematically discovered by the founders of Seventh-day Adventism and enthusiastically endorsed by Ellen G. White. As the great controversy neared its end, even God's sanctuary would have to be cleansed from accumulated sin, born by Jesus for the redeemed.

That insight, perhaps more than any other, would draw angry reaction from critics outside (and sometimes inside) Adventism, and so it is necessary to answer a question: why, in sinless heaven would anything ever need cleansing?

V

Does the heavenly sanctuary need to be cleansed?

It is sometimes the case that one can best answer a question by asking one. To decide whether the cleansing of the sanctuary is Biblical and logical, the question we need to ask is this: What happens to sin when it is forgiven?

Ask nearly any Christian that question, and quite probably you will get some variant of the following answer:

"It's gone; it disappears. At the moment of forgiveness, it doesn't exist any more."

But is it really that simple?

I once represented a client who, most of the time, was a model citizen, the sort of man you'd probably like to live next door to. But one night I got a telephone call that told me he was in the deepest trouble of his life. After lingering too long over happy hour at a local bar, he had made the mistake of trying to drive home. On the way, he had crossed the line in the road and hit another car head-on. That was bad enough, but there was worse coming: in the other car there was a fatality. In other words, this wasn't your average run-of-the-mill "deuce," a violation of Section 23102(a) of the California Vehicle Code. This was more than drunk driving; it was vehicular manslaughter. Get a jury angry enough, and they could decide that it was second degree murder.

Now let's ask the question that will help us understand what happens to forgiven sin. Suppose, from his jail ward hospital bed, my client awakens, realizes what he has done, and says the words that so often spill out when a person has failed catastrophically: "Oh, God, I'm so sorry." Suppose he *means* it. Suppose he requests salvation in the name of Jesus. Can my client be forgiven?

Of course he can. If this man can not repent and be saved, then Calvary is not as big a place as I thought it was.

But at the moment of forgiveness, does his sin magically disappear? Somewhere in Southern California that morning a funeral has to be arranged; a mother has to explain to her children why daddy isn't coming home—*ever*. Does my client's forgiveness mean the funeral doesn't have to happen?

In the real world, where real people live, sin doesn't just go away that easily, even when the sin itself is forgiven. Its consequences live on. Sometimes for centuries. Sometimes for millennia.

In the morning of human history, Abraham made a classic mistake, of the sort we are often tempted to repeat:

he decided that God couldn't fulfill His promise without a little human help. And so, at Sarah's suggestion, he undertook the responsibility of providing the son God had promised him. He soon realized it had been a tragic mistake. Almost at once it brought discord to his family. Soon it brought searing pain to him, as he had to send a son he loved out into an unforgiving desert. Abraham no doubt was sorry, but the pain lingered.

And lingered—lingered, in fact, to the very portals of the Second Coming where, in the late Twentieth Century, sons of Abraham would warily peer at each other over gunsights in the Middle East.

Sin *doesn't* just disappear, even when forgiven. Whenever we injure another life we set in motion a train of circumstances over which we often lose control, and the circumstances can be as enduring as time. This means that only at the end of time can you possibly total up the effects of a misdeed.

Which, in turn, means that the judgment cannot possibly occur until the end of time. In order to account for all the ultimate effects of sin, judgment has to be the last event just before the close of probation and the coming of Jesus.

All of this makes it clear why mankind needs a Savior. If sin doesn't conveniently evaporate just because we're sorry, then our "forgiveness" can happen only if Someone else has picked the burden of sin up for us. Someone else has to carry the load till the very end of time. And that was the daily lesson of the courtyard.

If someone sinned in Israel, they brought an animal to the door of the sanctuary courtyard. There they personally had to slay the sacrifice. Now the priest sprinkled the blood within the courtyard. Forgiven sin was symbolically being deposited in the very presence of God. *Sin wasn't disappearing; it was being carried by God Himself!*

That is what happened at Calvary. Sin did not magically disappear there; it was carried by the Lamb of

God. In I Peter 2:24, the apostle makes it clear that Jesus was carrying sin for us: "Who his own self *bare* our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live." (Italics supplied.)

"*Bare* our sins." He didn't obliterate them at Calvary; He *carried* them, and Peter's choice of language is significant. In describing what Jesus did with our sins, he could have used the Greek word *appolumi*, which means "to destroy." He did not select this term. Instead, he chose the Greek word *anapheroo* which means "to carry."

The concept from the sanctuary is clear. Sin has to be carried by Someone; we need a Sin Bearer. Thus even God's sanctuary gets polluted with sin.

The Hebrew sanctuary illustrated this with compelling clarity. Once a year the Jewish people saw, acted out, the method by which God will finally rid the universe of the accumulated load of sin. Like the Jewish sanctuary of old, Heaven's sanctuary would be cleansed. And Daniel 8:14 not only foretold that, it predicted the precise *day* when it would begin.

Everything God does appears to be on a great cosmic schedule. When Israel left Egypt, it did so on "the selfsame day" predicted 400 years before!¹¹⁶ When Jesus began to preach, He announced that "The time is fulfilled."¹¹⁷ When He died, it occurred on the very day foretold by sanctuary symbolism. And Acts 17:31 made it clear that the same thing would happen with the judgment:

"Because he hath appointed a *day*, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained..."

Judgment would begin on a specific day, foretold by prophecy. To herald that event, there would be a people

¹¹⁶ Exodus 12:41.

¹¹⁷ Mark 1:14.

who would announce it to the world: “Fear God, and give glory to him; *for the hour of his judgment is come...*”¹¹⁸ And in giving that message, they would convey some of the best news in the gospel. The judgment that began in 1844 was not designed to condemn the lost; that would happen later, during the thousand years. *This* judgment was designed to *vindicate the redeemed*.¹¹⁹

And in this judgment, Jesus is not only the Judge, He is the Defense Attorney for those who accept salvation. As we shall see, when He tries a case He does it so brilliantly that the sins of the redeemed not only disappear from heaven’s records—they also disappear from memory!

VI

“**M**y little children,” John wrote in I John 2:1, “these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

An *advocate*. He is personally defending our case.

But Acts 17:31 makes it clear that He is also the Judge! In other words, in this trial our Judge is also our defense attorney!

There is nothing like this in modern law. We have judges and we have defense attorneys, but never is one person allowed to act in both capacities. Yet in the judgment that began in 1844, one’s case will be decided by the same Being who is *defending* him.

¹¹⁸ Revelation 14:7.

¹¹⁹ I am indebted to Dr. Mervyn Maxwell for this phrase and concept. It is expressed in his book *Magnificent Disappointment*, one of the finest books on 1844, the sanctuary, and the judgment that I have ever seen. It is readable and clear, and should be read by every Adventist. He also points out that the investigative judgement also vindicates God, who will one day allow forgiven sinners into Heaven.

This leads to some of the best news in the gospel. When Jesus defends someone in the final judgment, He does so with such skill that the records of one's misdeeds disappear even from one's memory!

Throughout history, forgiveness has always had a bittersweet aspect. To be sure, we can have full confidence that God has forgiven us, but we still live with the memory of our mistakes. Peter, blindsided by a temptation he hadn't expected, turned the early morning air blue one Friday as he cursed his Lord. Even though forgiven, he carried to his dying day the burning regret of having failed when his Lord needed him most.

Such is an experience common to the whole human race. All of us have memories we wish desperately were not there—even after being forgiven. And here Adventism offers some extraordinarily good news that comes directly from the doctrine of the investigative judgment. When the judgment of the redeemed is completed, their mistakes are expunged not only from heaven's records but from the mind as well. They disappear from memory.

That may seem too good to be true, but it is thoroughly Biblical. In Hebrews 10:16 and 17 God promises that "I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."

That promise appears again in Hebrew 8 and in Jeremiah 31; and in Isaiah 43:25 God assures us that "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and *will not remember thy sins.*" The memory of our mistakes disappears, even from the mind of God.¹²⁰

In *The Great Controversy*, p. 620, Mrs. White describes a time when, although the saints "have a deep sense of their unworthiness, they have no concealed wrongs to reveal. Their sins have gone beforehand to judgment

¹²⁰ If God can't remember our sins, it is logical that neither can we.

and have been blotted out, and they cannot bring them to remembrance." In an earlier book, she expresses it in language that is quaint, but still powerfully reassuring: "Their sins had gone beforehand to judgment, and pardon had been written. Their sins had been borne away *into the land of forgetfulness...*"¹²¹

Adventism is sometimes accused of robbing people of their full assurance of salvation. If that statement by Mrs. White is not brimming with full assurance, it would be hard to imagine what *would* be. But there is more! Thus far, the sanctuary has brought good news for the believer. Now it expands, to create good news even for those with whom the believer lives.

The Investigative Judgment doesn't merely clean up heaven's records; it cleans up the life as well. And for those we live with, that may be the best news of all.

One of the most recurrent themes in the Bible is victory over sin—not in some far-off heaven, but here and now, while other human beings can benefit from it. It is a pretty selfish "gospel," after all, that offers forgiveness without victory, calling this "good news." If one only gets rid of guilt, without getting rid of sin, that may be good news to him. It is hardly good news to his wife (who, after all, has to live with him). It is probably not good news for his neighbors. It may not even be good news for his dog.

And the function of the investigative judgment is to blot sin not only out of heaven's records, but out of the life!

"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will...put my law in their inward parts, and *write it in their hearts.*" Only after this promise of victory in the life does God move on, in Jeremiah 31:34, to say that "I will remember their sin no more." The same linkage occurs in Hebrews 8 and 10. When sins are blotted out in the

¹²¹ Ellen G. White, *The Spirit of Prophecy* (Battle Creek, Mich.: Review and Herald Pub. Co., 1870), Vol. 1, p. 123.

judgment, they also are blotted from the life as well.

That concept, coming from the sanctuary doctrine, makes perfect legal sense. Even in earthly courts, the most convincing evidence is what a person does, not what he says. So in the heavenly judgment, one's life is the single best evidence of whether he has really accepted salvation. "And, behold, I come quickly," Jesus said in Revelation 22:12, "and my reward is with me, to give every man *according as his work shall be.*" (Italics supplied.)

For that reason, Adventists concluded that the sanctuary truth imposed on believers a very high standard of conduct. Indeed, they could no longer engage in some things that many, even in the Christian faith, had long allowed themselves. Conduct that might be acceptable in other times simply was not appropriate on the Day of Atonement. Adventists applied this conviction in many practical ways, one example of which will suffice: they adopted a very conservative standard on how one should dress.

VII

Dressing simply and modestly during times of spiritual urgency is a concept that is very scriptural. Throughout Biblical history, God's people had a habit of removing their ornaments when they felt a deep spiritual need. When Jacob was returning to face his estranged brother, he instructed his household to "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments..."¹²²

This was not a casual need. For all he knew, his angry brother would solve the problem of family inheritance by taking his life. This was live or die, and it would lead him, that night, to an encounter the Bible would later compare to the ordeal of God's people just before the Second Coming: the "time of Jacob's trouble"—a time of terrible danger and earnest intercession, marked with a faith so intense that it would not turn loose even

¹²² Genesis 35:2, 4.

when a man realized he was wrestling with God. Just before facing that challenge, Jacob took one last step to be sure that he and his family would not block heaven's help by harboring pride. *"Be clean, and change your garments."*

It is evident that his household knew exactly what that meant. "And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was by Shechem."

Before the time of Jacob's trouble, he and his family practiced dress reform!

Something very similar happened at the foot of Sinai. "For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee:

"therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

"And the children of Israel *stripped themselves of their ornaments* by the mount Horeb."¹²³

The lesson was pretty clear: when you have failed the Lord, there is little point in calling attention to self.

For most of human history, God's people have worn jewelry. But those who were closest to the Lord realized how contradictory self-glorification really is. Peter, who had reason to know how little we deserve to praise ourselves, put it kindly but plainly: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

"But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."¹²⁴

¹²³ Exodus 33:5, 6. (Italics supplied.)

¹²⁴ 1 Peter 3:3, 4.

In the abstract, there is nothing wrong with admiring the beautiful stones and metals God has made; in heaven, after all, the redeemed will wear crowns. But there is a difference: in heaven, the crowns will not be self-awarded; they will be given by Jesus. And when the redeemed stop to think about what all this has cost, the crowns will come off and be dropped at the Savior's feet.

So God's people throughout history had dressed simply and modestly when great things had to be asked of heaven; and now a handful of people—so few they could probably be measured in double digits—prepared themselves to give the mightiest message ever delivered: "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of His judgment is come."¹²⁵ Not surprisingly, the jewelry came off.

Inevitably, their convictions spilled over into other areas of life as well: stewardship of money; care of one's health; diet; even entertainment—the last of which may not be so peculiar after all. In an era when the height of risque naughtiness was a quick vaudevillian glimpse of a ruffled bloomer, early Adventists urged a higher standard of entertainment for those who expected to see the face of God.

One is entitled to ask how much more relevant their concerns are proving today.

VIII

Was there a sanctuary, or wasn't there?¹²⁶

And did it matter?

¹²⁵ Rev. 14:7.

¹²⁶ Ellen White certainly thought so, along with Paul and John the Revelator. "As the sanctuary on earth had two apartments, the holy and the most holy, so there are two holy places in the sanctuary in heaven....In holy vision the apostle John was permitted to enter heaven, and he there beheld the candlestick and the altar of incense, and as 'the temple of God was opened,' he beheld also 'the ark of His testament'....Paul declares that that pattern was the true sanctuary which is in heaven. John testifies that he saw it in heaven." *Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. IV, pp. 260, 161.

A. F. Ballenger had raised issues that, to many good people in the pews, might seem so unimportant as hardly to merit discussion, let alone a crisis. Holy place, most holy place—who cares where Christ went in A.D. 31? And while you're at it, why all the fuss about 1844? The important thing is just that He is in heaven—*isn't it?*

Or is it?

It might be well to remember that the sanctuary was not invented by Hiram Edson, or Ellen Harmon, or O. R. L. Crosier. It was not even invented by Moses. It was *revealed* to Moses by God Himself. As He gave His law, God had to somehow explain to dull human intellects something so complex that it had baffled even the minds of unfallen angels. Sin was, by Biblical definition, a "mystery," yet for humanity to make an intelligent choice they had to understand what sin was really like and how God would finally get this horrifying juggernaut stopped. In other words, they had to have a working knowledge of something that composed the most complex problem in the whole universe.

It is often the case that the most intricate events can be made understandable if one reduces everything to a diagram. In the courtroom, a simple sketch can often explain even complex issues to 12 sleepy jurors (and an occasionally sleepy judge). Professors routinely diagram everything from cell mitosis to Keynesian economics. One picture is indeed worth more than a thousand words, and on Sinai, God resorted to a diagram to explain how He would resolve the complicated mystery of sin.

As His vehicle He chose something virtually everybody on earth could quickly grasp: a building, with two rooms and a surrounding courtyard. Here, with just a few items of furniture, He would take symbolism to a depth never before dreamed of in the mind of man. He would show what happens to confessed and forgiven sin. He would vividly demonstrate mankind's need for a Savior. He would show that sin is remarkably enduring, and illustrate why, even for people who lived long ago,

the judgment has to occur close to the end of human history, when the final effects of sin can be seen.

By now, the thoughtful reader may well have realized the conclusion to which we are coming: if sin and salvation are mysteries otherwise incomprehensible to the human mind; if the sanctuary is how God chose to diagram those mysteries so we could understand them, then maybe it is essential to take the illustration exactly as He gave it—without human embellishment, and without yielding to the egocentric urge to “reinterpret” God’s revealed truth: in other words, to swallow our pride and accept the sanctuary illustration in exactly the way God portrayed it. Courtyard. Holy place. Most holy place. And, yes, even Daniel 8:14 and 1844.

Yet Albion Fox Ballenger, a prominent Adventist minister, could no longer see that.¹²⁷ Across England he left church after church splintered and confused as he raised questions critical of the sanctuary message, and now the brethren had to figure out what to do with him.

E. G. White had little doubt. In mid-May of 1905, while attending the General Conference session in Takoma

¹²⁷ The turmoil Ballenger caused reminds one of something that happened during the Counter-Reformation.

Daniel 8:9 refers to a “little horn” power who “magnified himself even to the prince of the host” and who caused God’s sanctuary to be “cast down.” Reformation theologians understood that this was no pagan force; this was an apostasy inside Christianity that they bluntly identified as the papacy.

Yet two Jesuit theoreticians deftly neutralized that issue in the minds of many Protestants by offering two alternative explanations. One of them said that Daniel 8:10 was fulfilled by a petty dictator named Antiochus Epiphanes, who for a time invaded the Jewish temple. The other offered the opposite solution: the apostasy foretold by Daniel was far in the future, he said, and had not yet happened. Take your choice: either theory conveniently diverted Daniel 8 from its real message. *And, wonder of wonders, many Christians bought into one or another of those ideas!*

In 1905 an equally fanciful “alternative” for the sanctuary truth was being offered by Ballenger, and the effect of his error coincided curiously with that of the Jesuit Counter-Reformationists 350 years before: it obscured the sanctuary truth, and thus helped obscure the fact that the little horn seen by Daniel was in fact an apostasy inside the Christian faith!

Park, she chanced to see Ballenger, and she had a pointed message to deliver. "You are the one the Lord presented before me in Salamanca," she declared. "Your theories, which have multitudes of fine threads, and need so many explanations, are not truth, and are not to be brought to the flock of God...."

"Let us all cling to the *established* truth of the sanctuary."¹²⁸

Ballenger's response was to meet with a committee of twenty-five denominational leaders, from which evolved a document he called "The Nine Theses." Adventist beliefs regarding the sanctuary were wrong "in almost every cardinal point," he asserted, and he particularly argued against applying the first-apartment ministry to the period after Christ's ascension.¹²⁹ If one followed Ballenger's reasoning, the 2300-day prophecy collapsed, the 1844 message went with it, the investigative judgment suddenly became a theological embarrassment to be forgotten as soon as possible. As A. G. Daniells put it, "everything tumbles"; and no one saw that more clearly than Ellen White.

"This message, if accepted, would undermine the pillars of our faith," she said just a few days later. "Those who try to bring in theories that would remove the pillars of our faith concerning the sanctuary...are working as blind men. They are seeking to bring in uncertainties, and to set the people of God adrift, without an anchor..."

"Stop right where you are; for God has not given you this message to bear to the people."¹³⁰

There is something strange about that testimony to Ballenger. Notice her choice of words. She plainly said that those who had brought in confusion about the sanctuary were "*seeking* to bring in uncertainties" that would "set the people of God adrift." It is one thing to

¹²⁸ Ellen G. White manuscript 59, 1905. (Italics supplied.)

¹²⁹ A. F. Ballenger, "The Nine Theses," pp. 1, 4.

¹³⁰ Ellen G. White manuscript 62, 1905.

get confused and to inadvertently spread one's confusion. But *seeking* to introduce uncertainties—that is another matter altogether. *That* is intentional. When someone *seeks* to set people adrift, he means to do what he is doing.

Why?

Why would someone do that?

And why choose the avenue that could most effectively destroy Adventism?

IX

Ballenger wrote for himself a life story filled with pathos. Bright, gifted, a sought-after campmeeting speaker, he had the makings of a champion for the Advent movement. To him the Spirit of God had personally spoken, in circumstances so clearly supernatural as to move him to tears. But Ballenger had played with doubt, as a person might chase a rainbow, and one day he played too long. The rainbow existed only in his own mind, and he chased it like a blind man.

He had a powerful command both of words and emotions; he seems to have understood that people will often support the underdog even in the face of religious truth, and as he left Adventism he played the role of martyr well, writing a book entitled *Cast Out for the Cross of Christ*. Interestingly, Kellogg would use much the same technique. After sweeping the Battle Creek Sanitarium out of the church, he would still speak persuasively about getting “down on his face and weeping” over the injustices supposedly done him by A. G. Daniells and Willie White. Canright, too, had affected a bit of martyrdom on leaving the Adventist faith.

The men who left the church generally repeated a similar pattern: they would solemnly promise to cause no trouble for the church, only to commence an attack on Adventism soon after leaving. Canright wrote a book about it; so did Ballenger, and from Riverside, California, he and his brother trumpeted anti-Adventist propaganda

in a paper entitled *The Gathering Call*. "Elder Ballenger has mystified minds with his large array of texts," Ellen White once wrote in her diary. "These texts are true, but he has placed them where they do not belong. We have had to meet many men who have come with just such interpretations....unsettling the minds of many by their readiness to talk, and by their great array of texts, which they have misapplied to suit their own ideas. *It is too late in this earth's history to get up something new.*"¹³¹

Strangely, however, some people were listening. It was almost beyond explanation. People who had enjoyed the greatest religious light in history were now imperiled by errors that could leave them trapped while they were unaware of it. For nearly two thousand years Christians had intoned the Biblical warning about errors so subtle as to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Like Peter, generation after generation of believers had solemnly informed the Lord that it might happen to others, but never to them—yet now it was here, and Ellen White poured out word pictures of a great apostasy: "Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat."¹³²

"What, I ask, can be the end?" she cried out on October 30, 1905. "Again and again I have asked this, and I have always received the same instruction: never leave a soul unwarned."¹³³

Never leave a soul unwarned. In the midst of deepest challenges, God's people were to do their best, never missing an opportunity to deliver truth. For now the war was on in deadly earnest. God's work was being challenged by something that Ellen White called the

¹³¹ Ellen G. White manuscript 145, 1905, italics supplied.

¹³² *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 81.

¹³³ Letter, Ellen G. White to Brn. Daniells and Prescott and their associates, October 30, 1905, J. H. N. Tindall collection.

“alpha of deadly heresies.”¹³⁴ And then she added a warning for the future. Another apostasy would come, even more treacherous for the work of God.

The “alpha” had arrived. The omega waited out there in the future. And Ellen White “trembled for our people.”¹³⁵

¹³⁴ *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 200.

¹³⁵ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, p. 53.

Chapter 7

“Omega”

I

“**T**he thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.”¹³⁶

It has been said that those who fail to learn from history are condemned to repeat its mistakes. For Seventh-day Adventists that statement is more than a cliché. It is a certainty.

Early in this century the church faced a problem of massive proportions: loss of major institutions and the crippling of the vital medical work. Large scale apostasy among some of its most influential men. Over-building of some institutions, resulting in a decline in spirituality, while the work in needy fields struggled to survive. Attacks on foundational truths such as the sanctuary. And a concerted effort by a well organized group to seize political control of the church.

At stake was the identity and mission of the people who called themselves Seventh-day Adventists. Powerful forces tried to alter doctrine and obtain management

¹³⁶ Eccl. 1:9.

control of the denomination, and in the course of that crisis Ellen White penned a warning for a future generation: *something like this would happen again, on an even larger scale.*

"Be not deceived; many will depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils. We have now before us the alpha of this danger. The omega will be of a most startling nature."¹³⁷

For decades Adventists have speculated about what would constitute the omega apostasy. Some people, eager to ignore the problem by putting it safely behind us, urge that it occurred when the denomination lost Battle Creek Sanitarium. It would be nice to accept that soothing assurance, but it simply doesn't fit history. When Ellen White gave her warning about omega, the Sanitarium was already well on its way toward being lost. (By 1906, Kellogg would bluntly tell the church they didn't own the institution and "never could own it," for it belonged "to the public.") If the omega was the loss of that institution, then why didn't she ever say it had happened? She never did, and for a very good reason: as late as 1915, when she died, the omega simply hadn't occurred yet.¹³⁸

Her son, W. C. White, certainly thought it hadn't. As late as the 1930's, Eld. White (who had served as his mother's administrative assistant during the alpha crisis) issued a statement entitled "The Alpha and the Omega," and catalogued by the White Estate as document QA-31-B-7. In it he said that "over the past 30 years" people

¹³⁷ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, p. 16; see also *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 197.

¹³⁸ In Kellogg's era, some people reached a *personal* "omega" experience when they apostatized, something EGW noted in her diary in August of 1904. But *personal* "omegas" were very different from the *final* omega awaiting the whole church, an event we can also call the "shaking." As Prof. Mervyn Maxwell points out, alpha-omega cycles have occurred repeatedly in Adventism and will, EGW says, occur "again and again." Thus, the lessons of Kellogg's time cannot be dismissed as mere history.

had mistakenly identified various events as omega and that “None of the matters brought before me as being the omega seemed to me to fit the case.” “It has always seemed to me,” he said, “that when the omega came it would bear two characteristics, somewhat similar to the alpha. The movement designated as the alpha, embraced a deep laid plan on the part of the great adversary of truth to introduce false doctrine which struck at the very vitals of Christian belief. It also embraced a persistent and strongly sustained effort to wrest the leadership of this people from the General Conference Committee and place it in the hands of other men.”

Eld. White’s analysis is, at the least, worth listening to. He did, after all, live through the alpha apostasy and was probably closer to his mother than anyone then living. As late as the mid-1930’s he did not believe that the omega had yet happened, but when it *did* arrive, he expected it to display two recognizable features:

1. It would contain some form of doctrinal heresy; and
2. It would constitute a political attempt to gain control of the church.

Thus, in his opinion, Omega would, like the alpha, be a challenge from *within*—a challenge that still lay in the future.

Think it through, and we simply cannot rationalize omega into some comfortably distant past. In the midst of a crisis so great that it cost two large institutions and a massive apostasy, Ellen White said that the omega would be of a “most startling nature” and that she “trembled” for our people. Bad as the alpha was, the omega would be worse. Nothing in our distant past fits that description. The alpha was a doctrinal heresy that came from *within*. It employed a powerful effort to seize control of the church *from within*. If alpha and omega are similar enough to be linked by letters from the same alphabet, omega will have to be something similar.

Put Elder White’s ideas next to his mother’s

statements, and you can fill in even more detail. Ellen White said that the omega would be of a “most startling nature.” If, as W. C. White said, doctrinal error will be an element of the omega apostasy, then we should look for some doctrinal aberration startlingly at odds from historic Adventism.

In 1981 my book *Omega* pointed out the possibility of a future risk for the church. To my surprise, not everyone was delighted to hear that, and a number of zealous critics took umbrage, sometimes in tones surprisingly emotional for scholars. One professor published the charge that the book was historically incorrect—a criticism that might have bothered me more had I not chanced to see a copy of the initial manuscript for his article, in which he made repeated footnote references to John *Henry* Kellogg.

Fortunately, my spirits were bolstered during that time by numerous calls from people who had lived in Battle Creek. All of them (including a lady who was a Kellogg relative, and who still received benefit payments from the Kellogg trust) confirmed that the history was indeed correct. One of my brightest recollections of that period was a meeting where learned critics of the book were having a field day complaining about its supposed inaccuracies. Suddenly a man of 102 years arose, his mind still sharp enough for the best. “I don’t know where you all were in 1905,” he declared to the forty-something critics, “but I was 25 years old then and I remember these events well. The book tells it like it happened.” I was told that the meeting then adjourned, and the people went home.

And so we turn to our most vital task: what can we learn from the alpha apostasy that might help us recognize omega?

II

“**I**n the book ‘Living Temple’ there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. The omega will follow, and will be received by those who are not willing

to heed the warning God has given."¹³⁹

Omega. Something else would come, sufficiently similar to the alpha to justify linking the two events by letters taken from a common alphabet. It was a cryptic warning, shouted into the wind of an engulfing crisis when she had little time for anything but the problems of the present. But she gave enough details to enable any thoughtful student to recognize the problem when it recurred.

In a fascinating series of documents called *Special Testimonies*, Series B, she gave some specifics that are well worth reading. As one reviews them, one feels much like an intelligence officer who has just discovered a copy of the enemy's operation orders.

"The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in *giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith* and engaging in a process of *reorganization*. Were this reformation to take place, what would result? The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our *religion would be changed*. The *fundamental principles* that have sustained the work for the last fifty years would be accounted as *error*. A new organization would be established. *Books of a new order* would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced. The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The *Sabbath*, of course, would be *lightly regarded*, as also the God who created it. *Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement*."¹⁴⁰

During World War II, the Allies successfully broke Japan's JN-25 code, by which they could read Japanese operation orders, including the one that told the exact

¹³⁹ *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 200.

¹⁴⁰ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, pp. 39-40. (Italics supplied.)

location of Japan's very capable Admiral Yamamoto on the day they shot down his airplane. Possessing that information gave them enormous advantages.

And possession of *Special Testimonies* is the equivalent, for the church, of having broken the code.

That document is a detailed depiction of some force trying to destroy Adventism, and the plan is clever. It hits all the bases. Notice how it enters. Adventists feel a special obligation to examine claims of "new light" because that is how the denomination began, and the apostasy unmasked by Ellen White masquerades as "new light," offering something "better" than the established truths of Adventism. In her words, the fundamental principles that launched the Seventh-day Adventist church "would be accounted as error."

Accompanying this would be a well-orchestrated campaign to convince a majority of the church that the new view is correct. "Books of a new order" would be circulated in a crusade to court the minds and loyalties of church members. In a ploy especially apt to lure the educated and wealthier classes, "intellectual philosophy" would stealthily replace simple faith in the plain meaning of the Scriptures. And, as the alpha illustrated, these efforts would especially be directed at the youth of the church.

As the plan matured, its presence would be revealed by a collapse of standards. The Sabbath, for example, would be "lightly regarded."

Finally, political force evidently would be used to attempt all this change, because "*nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement.*" Utilizing the pretext of "new light," powerful forces would seek to bend the church of God into some unrecognizable new shape.

Impossible? Not according to history. Something like this has already happened once. According to Ellen White it will all happen again, in a larger and more dangerous way. That makes it essential for us to take a careful look

backward at the events of the alpha, compare them with the warnings in the Spirit of Prophecy, and thus discover what the challenge called *omega* will involve.

III

Alpha and Omega: an Analysis

In the alpha apostasy there were a number of recurring characteristics, sufficiently distinct to create a clear picture of how this sort of threat might look in the future.

Deception

One of the major characteristics of the alpha was deceit. Sometimes outright untruths were told. Sometimes only part of the truth was given, and thus even truth could be made to give false impressions. Once Ellen White wrote to Dr. Kellogg advising him about a large building in Chicago. He often cited that testimony as proof that Ellen White was in error; no such building existed, he smugly asserted, and Sister White had simply been mistaken. What Dr. Kellogg did not bother to add was that his people at Battle Creek had fully *intended* to build it, proceeding so far as to have a full set of architectural plans drawn, before the project was stopped.

Particularly did Mrs. White warn that some people would be dishonest about their belief in the Spirit of Prophecy and in the basic doctrines of the church. Where job security or political expediency required it, they would pretend loyalty to something they did not believe in. In vision she saw groups of people at Battle Creek specifically planning to hide their antagonism to her and to certain fundamental beliefs. Thus concealing their true feelings, they felt they could more effectively appeal to Adventists who might never listen to them if their real motives were obvious at the start.

Repeatedly in the alpha one finds the truth being bent for some tactical goal. Mrs. White described it quite graphically: "Mischievous tongues and acute minds,

sharpened by long practice in evading the truth, are continually at work to bring in confusion.”¹⁴¹

An interesting psychological mechanism can be seen here. Some of those engaged in the misuse of truth had crossed some invisible bridge in their own minds, and had reached a point where they felt they were absolutely right. As a result, they could display an apparent conviction that was impressive. Such was the case with Dr. Kellogg, and Mrs. White warned the General Conference leadership not to let him “beguile you by his statements. Some may be true; some are not true. He may suppose that all his assertions are true; but you should neither think that they are, nor encourage him to believe that he is right.”¹⁴²

Truth. The most vital commodity in the world. Our very survival depends on it. Each day we rely on accurate information about even the most basic things, such as the color of a traffic light or the label on a jar of food. Truth is the only channel through which God communicates. *And truth was being manipulated by men who claimed to have new light for the church of God, men who were not even being honest about their own intentions!*

“Before the development of recent events, the course that would be pursued by Dr. Kellogg and his associates was plainly outlined before me. He with others *planned how they might gain the sympathies of the people. They would seek to give the impression that they believed all points of our faith, and had confidence in the Testimonies. Thus many would be deceived, and would take their stand with those who had departed from the faith.*”¹⁴³

“Very adroitly some have been working to make of no effect the Testimonies of warning and reproof,” Ellen

¹⁴¹ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 195.

¹⁴² Ellen G. White letter 138, 1902.

¹⁴³ Ellen G. White letter 328, 1906. (Italics supplied.)

White said, on June 28, 1905. “*At the same time, they deny doing any such thing.*”¹⁴⁴

All of this, she said, would recur. “The contest will wax more and more fierce....*Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against principles of Satan.*”¹⁴⁵ This characteristic of the alpha is a prime characteristic to look for in omega.

Divisiveness

The alpha disclosed the paradox of men claiming to have discovered a truth far superior to historic Adventism while at the same time creating chaos wherever their ideas were voiced. Churches were split by this heresy, and national boundaries seemed to have no effect on the phenomenon. The Battle Creek church descended into turmoil. Churches in England, Scotland, and Ireland also saw commotion when theories were advanced that attacked the sanctuary truth. Sometimes heresy can be difficult to recognize at first, particularly if it is expressed in a way that fits the mood of its era. But Christ has given His church another test by which truth and error can be distinguished. It is behavior—the way people go about promoting their ideas, and the behavioral effects of their teachings. Should divisive ideas such as Ballenger’s reappear in Adventism, history suggests that our people ought to be particularly wary of the doctrines that are fomenting the problem.

This sort of trouble can manifest itself with an interesting twist. Those advocating a dissident theology can sometimes seek to shield their views behind calls for “unity” or “pluralism.” The argument has a superficial appeal. Christians ought in every possible way to unify rather than fragment. Yet even the gift of unity, like God’s other gifts, can be abused. To introduce into the church errors that will harm it, and then to protect them under an umbrella of “unity,” is a problem that Ellen White

¹⁴⁴ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, page 31. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁴⁵ *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 11, p.5. (Italics supplied.)

had to address in 1904. "We are to unify," she declared, "but not on a platform of error."¹⁴⁶ "We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith."¹⁴⁷

Attacks on Fundamental Beliefs

All major apostasies have shared the common ground of attacking the most basic Adventist beliefs, among which are the sanctuary, the investigative judgment, and the inspiration of the Spirit of Prophecy. Often, advocates of change will use the rationale that even Ellen White urged receptivity to new light. They seldom add the *conditions* upon which new light must be judged: it will never contradict established truth. "Men and women will arise professing to have some new light or some new revelation, whose tendency is to unsettle faith in the old landmarks...False reports will be circulated, and some will be taken in this snare...Through this means many souls will be balanced in the wrong direction."¹⁴⁸ When this occurs, she urged God's people to resist it "with most determined zeal."¹⁴⁹

In the alpha, a major point of attack was the sanctuary. Canright had laid the foundation by criticizing it fifteen years before. Ballenger openly broke with the church over the issue, and Spicer instantly recognized an assault on the sanctuary embedded in Kellogg's fanciful new ideas. "Over and over again during the past fifty years" the sanctuary had come under attack, Ellen White declared, and she warned that this would happen again. "In the future, deception of every kind is to arise.... *The enemy will bring in false theories, such as the doctrine that there is no sanctuary.* This is one of the points on which there will be a departing from the faith."¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Letter, Ellen G. White to Dr. W.H. Riley, Aug. 3, 1904.

¹⁴⁷ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 161.

¹⁴⁸ Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946) pp. 49, 50.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁵⁰ *Advent Review and Sabbath Herald*, May 25, 1905. (Italics supplied.) Also see Ellen G. White, *Counsels to Writers and Editors* (Nashville, Tenn.: Southern Pub. Assn., 1946), p. 53.

The conclusion seems inescapable. Omega, whatever and whenever it is, will most almost certainly include an attack on the sanctuary doctrine. Perhaps it will be a replay of tired arguments worn out long ago by the likes of Canright and Ballenger. Perhaps it will be something new. Perhaps, having had a century to mature, it will be sophisticated enough to deceive, if possible, “the very elect.” But in that time of confusion, there are some basic principles that can keep the careful student from being misled. If someone plays games with the elegant, simple clarity of God’s two apartment sanctuary illustration; if the clear language of the Spirit of Prophecy is tampered with or explained away; if the mathematical precision of the 2,300 days and 1844 are ignored or obscured, something is wrong.

Jesus had some good advice for His followers in that period of end-time confusion: “Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not.”¹⁵¹ Until He returns, you can know where to find Jesus: in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary, where He has been since October 22, 1844. If someone suggests otherwise, “go not forth” to listen.

Collapse of Standards

In Adventist history, one can see an interesting relationship of cause and effect. Whenever the sanctuary is challenged, the inevitable result is an attack on standards, and vice versa.

In 1889, shortly after his final apostasy from Adventism, Dudley Canright wrote a book entitled *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*. (Yes, he spelled “day” with a capital “D.”) In my personal library I have two copies, one a 1914 edition original, and one a recent reprint, published by evangelical critics of Adventism. The book is still being used today.

In his book, Canright roundly attacked the sanctuary.

¹⁵¹ Matthew 24:26.

But he did more; he also attacked the law and the Sabbath. In so doing, he was just being intellectually consistent. Adventism is a system of highly interrelated truths: attack one, and dominoes begin to tumble. So it is with standards and the sanctuary. If you attack the sanctuary, where judgment is taking place, logic compels you to attack the law, which is the basis for judgment.

There is nothing subtle about Adventism. It does not whisper to the world, it cries out, symbolized in Revelation as angels shouting from mid-heaven. It declares that God's law is still applicable, even if this means losing one's job, or risking social misunderstanding, or saying "No" to a desperately frightened world at the end of time, when a global consensus has been reached on the matter of a day of worship. Having elevated the law to that level of visibility, there could be no greater hypocrisy than for Adventists to act as though it can't be kept. Confuse them on this issue, and you could reduce them to nothing more than a bad joke at the end of time.

"I'm sorry, your honor; I know I didn't report for work as required on Saturday. But that is my Sabbath, according to the law of God *which I cannot keep*."

It's time to get real: either the law of God can be kept, or we have no right to challenge the world with it when Sunday laws are passed, and if I were going to devise a way to neutralize this church, leaving it with no end-time message, I couldn't think of a better method than to convince a sizeable number of Adventists that the law can't be kept.

But this is precisely the effect of an attack on the sanctuary or the investigative judgment. The sanctuary and sanctification are indivisibly connected. Attack one, and you also injure the other. Remove the sanctuary truth, with its Day of Atonement message of true reform, and you are soon left in a maze of empty theological terms, trying to explain why works are even necessary. Attack sanctification, and you can never rest comfortably

until you remove the haunting light of the sanctuary. This was the effect of Canright's reasoning, and lowered standards—particularly moral standards—were seen during Kellogg's apostasy.

Is there a possibility that this, too, will be repeated as a part of the omega? Perhaps. And one of the best insights can be found in the symbolism used by Ellen White. Remember that alpha and omega are two letters at the polar extremes of the same alphabet. They are linked by something in common, yet they look opposite directions. There is a significance here that becomes apparent with a little reflection.

To grasp it, one has to look back at the theology of the alpha. Even though he always proclaimed his belief in Christianity, Kellogg's theology, taken to its extreme, removes the need for a Savior. God, he claimed, was in everything—in the air we breathe, even in the lawns that stretched outside his home. If God is in everything, He must also be in man, and thus every human act becomes an act of God. Divinity becomes so internal to man that the very thought of an external Savior is logically meaningless. (It was rumored that some of Kellogg's most fervid devotees actually wondered whether, if a person practiced enough ardent health reform, he might escape death altogether.)

No Savior—nothing outside of man. That, taken to an extreme that neither Kellogg nor Waggoner may have ever fully realized, is the ultimate message of the alpha. Now follow the logical symbolism of the two letters, sharing the same subject matter but located at opposite extremes. If the alpha is an error regarding the role of Christ in salvation, and if it points one direction in the Greek alphabet, is it possible that the omega will also misinterpret Christ's work while pointing opposite?

To put it another way, is there a chance that the “omega of deadly heresies” will try to put Christ totally *outside* of man, thus introducing confusion over the need for sanctification because it makes the gospel totally *external*?

It is a danger that deserves the most careful reflection. The role and work of Christ are the very center of Christianity—whether that involves His work on the cross or in the sanctuary. Become confused about Christ's work either place and, as Daniells so aptly put it, "everything tumbles." In 1904, Adventists were being asked to accept a doctrine that made salvation entirely internal. It was an enormously appealing error, perfectly suited to attract people in an age of optimism, in which everyone from ministers to financiers talked of human advancement.

But what about a later age, in which a disillusioned world looks back across the wreckage of its century and sees only crime and war and economic uncertainty, aggravated by a federal debt that could, in the near future, require America's entire personal income tax revenue just to pay the interest on the national debt? What about Adventists, weary and discouraged with the long delay, ripe for something that seems to offer an easier way out of endless challenge?

To this group of people the devil could never hope to sell the boundless optimism of the alpha. But he could try something else. In a world turned upside down by crises, he could turn the alpha upside down, approaching the same subject from the opposite extreme. He could reach for the end of the alphabet and find *omega*. And his words, falling across a weary church, might sound like music: "Relax. Quit worrying about works. Your only task is to believe."

His deception would be dangerous because it would come mixed with some truth. To be sure, salvation comes from faith alone. But Hebrews 11, the finest sermon ever delivered on the subject, reveals something interesting about righteousness by faith. *Everyone who practices it does something.*

"By faith Abel *offered* unto God a more excellent sacrifice....

"By faith Noah...*prepared* an ark....

"By faith Abraham...*obeyed*....

"By faith Moses...*refused*....

"By faith they *passed through the Red sea*...

"By faith" they all *did* something. That was righteousness by faith, and that was Bible Adventism, honed to unprecedented clarity by a rediscovery of the law beneath the mercy seat, and if the devil could confuse end-time Adventists about that, he would, in one stroke, have taken Adventism back in time to a point before its beginning, like some weird time warp out of science fiction.

Adventism had begun, in 1844, with one of the deepest revivals since Pentecost. "The barriers of pride and reserve were swept away. Heartfelt confessions were made...often was heard the sound of earnest intercession."¹⁵² The result was a power for witnessing thereafter imitated but seldom attained. Evidently the early Adventists were experts on church growth: "Vast crowds listened in breathless silence to the solemn words. Heaven and earth seemed to approach each other....None who attended those meetings can ever forget those scenes of deepest interest."¹⁵³

If the church continued in that way, the coming of Jesus would soon follow. The devil had to find a way to blunt that message, and it mattered little to him whether God's people erred by thinking that salvation was entirely internal, or whether they gave up, at last, beneath the gathering storm clouds at the end of time, relying on something that masqueraded as faith but was really only a cloak for spiritual failure.

For Adventists who are growing weary of high standards, such an omega attack on the law might succeed brilliantly, sweeping out large numbers. But what about "conservative" Adventists, who still believe in both law and victory? Could the argument be tuned to try to deceive them?

¹⁵² *The Great Controversy*, p. 369.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 370.

I can think of a way. First, talk about something no one can argue with: *love*. Then, in the most subtle, careful way, suggest that standards and “love” may be in tension with each other. Refer to some of the standards that seem to make heavy demands on us—tithe paying, Sabbath keeping, diet. Portray them in a way that subliminally emphasizes the “burden” they seem to carry, and in the same breath create a verbal image of a rigid, judgmental person whom it is easy to dislike—a tithe-paying vegetarian who is miserable and wants everyone else to be, too. Having created that strawman, then uplift “love,” as though, in some magical, undefined way, love somehow *replaces* standards.

Do it cleverly enough, and you might even have some conservatives saying “Amen,” not realizing that they had just said amen to a concept which, taken to its logical end, says that you can be a tithe-paying vegetarian or you can be a loving Christian, but you can't be both.

Could such an argument arise? It *did* in Ellen White's day, and here is how she responded: “There is a spurious experience prevailing now everywhere in regard to the love of Jesus—that we must dwell on the love of Jesus, that faith in Jesus is all we need—but these souls must be instructed that *the love of Jesus in the heart will lead to humility of life and obedience to all His commandments*....The love of Jesus that goes no farther than the lips will not save any soul, but be a *great delusion*.”¹⁵⁴

The simple truth is that standards are the way we express love in everyday life. Tithing and Sabbath-keeping show love to God. Honesty, respect, and, yes, the seventh commandment, show love to others. And proper diet is love expressed to oneself. (Since when is love shown through hardened arteries and Sunday morning hangovers?) It is true that one can preach

¹⁵⁴ Ellen G. White, *This Day With God* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1979, p. 299. (Italics supplied.)

standards while being a thoroughly miserable person, critical of others. But guess what? One can be an obnoxious liberal, too. *Standards* aren't at war with love, fallen human *nature* is. And standards are the instrument panel by which we fly through the cloudy turbulence of temptation.

At the Jordan River, God's people were invincible—so long as they were obedient. There was no way King Balak could stop them, not even by hiring an apostate prophet, who helplessly intoned blessings over the nation he was supposed to curse. *And yet there was a way.* God's people could be neutralized if they quit *acting* like his people. Balaam might not be able to curse Israel, but he could bring them to the brink of disaster with a moral failure.

God's blessings were free, but they could be forfeited.

This was the issue, and it was here that Satan always chose to make his assault on the church, either by saying that its standards were unnecessary or that they were unattainable. Here Canright had foundered, openly challenging the law, the Sabbath, and the Spirit of Prophecy. Dr. Kellogg, approaching the same reef from another direction, also made shipwreck of his faith with unproved ideas that attacked the investigative judgment and the sanctuary. As those ideas spread, standards began to collapse. The Sanitarium drifted away from a Sabbathkeeping operational plan; Sabbath recreation for patients became more and more secular. Even in a health care institution, where care of the sick is typically regarded as a proper Sabbath activity, it is possible to grow careless with Sabbath standards. Elective procedures—things that are not urgent and that could just as easily be done any other day—may begin to drift into Sabbath hours. To put it in the modern vernacular, it is one thing to remove a ruptured appendix on Sabbath; quite another to do an elective facelift.

Battle Creek Sanitarium began to show the decline in standards that accompanies false theology. Ultimately,

there were moral problems, “confusing ideas of free love” and “immoral practices,” that Eld. Christian would later characterize as a “chapter of shame.”¹⁵⁵ Long before it was formally lost to the church, Battle Creek Sanitarium was lost as a functional part of Adventism. God’s people were again at the Jordan, and Lucifer knew well how to get them stopped before they crossed the river.

Hence it is vital for us to understand what some have portrayed as a paradox in Adventism: the duty to expend human effort in bringing to fruition a gospel that, most Protestants argue, is a free gift from God that shouldn’t require such human input.

It is an apparently complex question that can be rather easily answered if one understands two principles of law called *condition precedent* and *condition subsequent*. A condition precedent is one that is imposed on a person before he or she receives property. In order for title to vest, the individual must *do* something (like pay for it). In a religious sense, this is a counterfeit of the true gospel, and it is the foundation of all false religions, including paganism. Taken to its extreme, it demands human sacrifices in order to bring people into favor with deity.

Condition subsequent is an apparently similar but operationally very different rule. Here property can be given outright, without the requirement of any prior act. But it, too, is transferred on conditions—conditions that operate *after* the transfer. A man might give land to his nephew, for example, upon condition that it never be used for the sale of alcoholic beverages; if the new owner ever breaches that condition, the land reverts to the original grantor. And that is an example, in human law, of the mechanism for the plan of salvation. The gift is free; in no sense can one be said to have earned it. Yet by his abuse of the conditions upon which it was granted, one can make himself unfit for a neighborhood called the New Jerusalem.

¹⁵⁵ *The Fruitage of Spiritual Gifts*, pp. 291, 292.

The concept of righteous living is indelibly imprinted in the gospel. "Ye are the light of the world, Christ said. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your *good works*, and glorify your Father, which is in heaven."¹⁵⁶ There is no rationale in Christ's theology for uncertainty over the role of good works, or for calling obedience to God "legalism."

Legalism is not another term for obedience. Legalism is *trying* to obey simply for the reward that comes with it.

There is a difference.

Usually, the charge of "legalism" comes from people of other denominations, who do not understand the Sabbath and hence see it as a meaningless act of "works." When that accusation comes from outside the church, most Adventists are able to recognize it for what it is. But what would be the effect if that accusation should ever come from *within* the church? The Spirit of Prophecy has a very sobering answer, *given in the very words of Lucifer as he counsels with his fallen angels on how best to destroy the Seventh-day Adventist church*:

"Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us harm. Lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God will be our most effective helpers. Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. Many will *not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith. We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are less strict than they once believed*, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. *Thus they will separate from Christ*, then they will have no strength to resist our power, *and ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion.*"¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Matthew 5:14, 16. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁵⁷ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Cal: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 474. (Italics supplied.)

That is another spectacular example of the gift of prophecy decoding an enemy operation order. This statement doesn't suggest that an attack on standards *may* be part of the shaking; it says it *will* be.

Conspiracy and Intrigue: A Covert Struggle for Control of the Church

Whatever troubles they may ever encounter, Seventh-day Adventists are still very special people. They are a global family. One day in Rabaul, New Britain, my wife and her parents were walking toward their hotel. A local man came up beside them and said, "You seven day?" He, too, was an Adventist, and in the crowd of foreigners, he had recognized fellow believers!

In the Solomon Islands, when we visited there, employers routinely preferred to hire young Adventists because they were honest and dependable; learning this, applicants would sometimes claim to be Adventists in order to get a job, and the mission president regularly received calls from employers to verify that the applicant really was an SDA. God's people are special, and God's church is special, and because we think of ourselves as a family it is hard to imagine that anyone within the church could ever intentionally conspire to change it. But the blunt fact remains that this has happened. It was a part of the disaster called the alpha.

It is quite evident that Kellogg had something like this on his mind for quite some time. Before the turn of the century, he had deftly altered the charter for Battle Creek Sanitarium in an effort to ease it away from denominational control. As the battle over his book heated up, so did his efforts to gain control of the church, and his methods suggest something very deep and very well planned. Ellen White warned that "spies" were at work, and on another occasion she cautioned that "In the camp there have been many traitors in disguise, and Christ knows every one of them. God has been dishonored by disloyal subjects....To those abiding in Battle Creek, I say, For your souls' sake, let as many as

can, get away from its strife and its perils."¹⁵⁸

In 1906 the "strife and perils" to which she referred were becoming acute—too real to brush off with the epithet of "paranoia," because the techniques that had been employed on both sides of the Atlantic were beginning to split churches, ruin old friendships, and leave wounds that would be a long time healing.

For those who were trying to change the church, this was a game in which appearances counted for much. If one could make it seem that he had momentum on his side, others might be persuaded to join, and a good way to create the appearance of momentum was to convert influential people to one's point of view. It is evident that Ballenger had mastered the art of one-on-one persuasion, and that in England he had sowed the seeds of doctrinal revolt widely. Reporting from the British Isles, Elder Farnsworth said that Ballenger had been working with key members and that he claimed that "Brother Hutchinson in Ireland viewed the matter just as he did, and quite a number of influential lay brethren also. Brother Meredith who has charge of the work in Wales said that quite a number of the lay brethren in Wales were upset by this view, and in North England Brother Andross is having serious difficulty in the Birmingham church, and in other places too with some of the leading brethren on the subject of the sanctuary."¹⁵⁹

Notice the wording. *Leading brethren*. Ballenger was going after the thought leaders—a technique we will see again later in this book. Once key people accepted the new view, others would follow, and change could expand more widely into the church.

That sort of ferment is never accidental. When large numbers of Adventists in different places suddenly go awry on something as clear as the sanctuary, it can only mean that a lot of well-planned work has been going on

¹⁵⁸ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 15.

¹⁵⁹ Letter, A.G. Daniells to W.C. White, March 16, 1905.

for some time. Someone has to *cause* that kind of trouble, working carefully to gain the support of prominent workers and lay leaders.

Kellogg, too, seems to have engaged in this sort of thing. "Before the development of recent events, the course that would be pursued by Dr. Kellogg and his associates was plainly outlined before me. *He with others planned how they might gain the sympathies of the people. They would seek to give the impression that they believed all points of our faith, and had confidence in the Testimonies. Thus many would be deceived, and would take their stand with those who had departed from the faith.*"¹⁶⁰

Notice the point. These were not outsiders; these were people within the church, who pretended to be something they were not. They didn't believe in historic Adventism, but for the sake of widening their influence, they knew how to use the right words to sound convincing. Gospel, Sabbath, Advent—the terms rolled off tongues with studied ease, allaying concern that there was really anything here to worry about. Where the audience expected it, Ellen White would even be mentioned (though a careful observer might notice that she was seldom quoted on doctrinal issues). For many people, a superficial use of familiar terms was enough to disguise one's real intent. But the agenda was change.

There was a danger in even discussing matters with the leaders of the alpha, and it involved the risk of being misquoted. "When engaged in discussion over these theories, their advocates will take words spoken to oppose them, and will make them appear to mean the very opposite of that which the speaker intended them to mean."¹⁶¹ Thus, even to talk with these men was to risk having one's words twisted so that they appeared to support Kellogg's ideas. The conspirators could in

¹⁶⁰ Ellen G. White letter 328, 1906. (Emphases supplied.)

¹⁶¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, p. 42.

this way make it seem that the person quoted was “with them,” and that their numbers were larger than they really were...a deadly game, played for human loyalties, with the ultimate prize being control of the church. The most sinister part of this behavior was its similarity to something else: it was the same technique Lucifer used when he tried to seize control of heaven.

As Lucifer's rebellion had grown in heaven, he had employed the technique of going from angel to angel, drawing them out to make statements he then repeated and misconstrued to other angels. It was a cunning tactic that made him seem to have more support than really existed, while at the same time discrediting those who were loyal to God, weakening their credibility and hence their influence on the side of truth. The whole grimly fascinating account can be found in chapter 1 of *Patriarchs and Prophets*, and in Vol. 1 of *The Spirit of Prophecy*, and as Ellen White saw Kellogg employing this stratagem, she wrote him in great distress, reminding him that the same tactics had caused the fall of one third of heaven's angels.

A Climate of Personal Attack

Lucifer had discovered that he had to neutralize the influence of angels who were faithful to God; the conspirators of the alpha made much the same discovery with respect to fellow church members who wouldn't accept their new theology, and they seem to have taken a page from Lucifer's manual in rebellion: if you couldn't convince someone, then neutralize his or her reputation. Kellogg's forces turned their creative attention to Ellen White, whose reputation they did their best to sully. Subtle doubts were cast on the reliability of her messages, sometimes by workers who for tactical or employment reasons pretended to be giving her their support. Kellogg could keep people spellbound as he flooded them with stories about how he had “set a trap for Sister White,” and how her testimonies to him were fueled by misinformation provided by A. G. Daniells and “Weeping

Willie" White. All of this Mrs. White accurately summed up: "Very adroitly some have been working to make of no effect the Testimonies...At the same time, they deny doing any such thing."¹⁶²

Nor did others escape the acid shower of gossip. We have seen how the leader of the General Conference was one night threatened by a worker who avidly supported the new theology. That gentleman warned Daniells that if he did not line up, he would be turned out of office and "rolled in the dust." Opposition to the alpha seemed to be the signal for an attack against anyone, including the highest levels of church leadership, who opposed it. Ellen White describes ruined friendships and enduring suspicions; she spoke of "entire families who have once rejoiced in the truth, but who will lose faith because of calumnies and falsehoods brought to them in regard to those whom they have loved." Tragically, they listened, accepting the rumors for truth when they should have talked to the people involved. For a time, Eve-like, their excursion into this game of gossip and new theology brought a strange sense of exhilaration: "False zeal accompanied their new theories, which hardened their hearts against the advocates of truth..."¹⁶³

So charisma, the spread of gossip about people on the side of right, and the appeal of leading personalities were all large factors in an apostasy that swept out of the church even men who had once given the Third Angel's Message "in verity." Every device was employed to draw loyalty to a man and to his tinselled ideas, and the technique worked with dreadful success. It is a threat for which God's people ought to be watching with vigilant awareness. And for those who feel drawn by the magnetism of a personality, who are intrigued by new ideas that may appeal even to leading thinkers, there is a warning out of 1905: "I am afraid of the men

¹⁶² *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 31.

¹⁶³ *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 11, pp. 9, 10.

who have entered into the study of the science that Satan carried into the warfare in heaven....When they once accept the bait, it seems impossible to break the spell that Satan casts over them."¹⁶⁴

In all of this one can see a determined plan to change the church, and Ellen White's description is graphic: "Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement."¹⁶⁵ There was a strange ruthlessness, seldom, if ever, seen before, in which longstanding friendships no longer seemed to count for much and traditional loyalties mysteriously disappeared. John Kellogg had been helped financially through medical school by the Whites; now he turned on his old friends with cutting attacks. A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, who had traveled and preached with Ellen White, forsook old associations in favor of the new theology. Everywhere the new theology went there seemed to be trouble, brought on by "mischievous tongues and acute minds, sharpened by long practice in evading the truth."¹⁶⁶

Suddenly, mysteriously, Adventists who had been lifelong friends didn't seem to know each other any more. And for some reason that brings to mind a strange dream that Ellen White once had.

"I dreamed that I was in Battle Creek looking out from the side glass at the door and saw a company marching up to the house, two and two. They looked stern and determined. I knew them well and turned to open the parlor door to receive them, but thought I would look again. The scene was changed. The company now presented the appearance of a Catholic procession. One bore in his hand a cross, another a reed. And as they approached, the one carrying a reed made a circle around the house, saying three times: 'This house is proscribed. The goods must be confiscated. They have

¹⁶⁴ Letter, Ellen G. White to Brethren Daniells and Prescott and their associates, October 30, 1905, J. H. N. Tindall Collection.

¹⁶⁵ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 205.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

spoken against our holy order.' Terror seized me, and I ran through the house, out of the north door, and found myself in the midst of a company, some of whom I knew, but I dared not speak a word to them for fear of being betrayed."¹⁶⁷

She doesn't say what she thought the dream meant. After describing it, she abruptly goes on to tell of her travels in the early days of Adventism. Its meaning, if any there is, remains undefined. But it hangs like a question mark in one's mind, mysterious and unanswered.

It is enough to say that in the alpha apostasy, a lot of Adventists who thought they knew each other suddenly began acting like strangers. As early as 1902, some church members had threatened to sue the church to prevent relocation of the Review and Herald to Washington, D.C. In 1905 this spirit of strife and coercion surfaced again. The Battle Creek Tabernacle became the focal point of a struggle for control; a lawsuit was actually filed in the Michigan court to prevent transfer of the church property to the local Adventist conference. Loyal church members finally won, but only after a two-year fight.

Even a Chicago newspaper trumpeted from beneath front-page headlines that the Adventist church was about to be split "in twain," and the news story laid much of the blame on Ellen White. The whole sorry affair served to illustrate another point that identified the alpha: wherever it went, trouble followed.

The lesson, as one seeks to identify the omega, should be obvious.

Misuse of Scripture

"We are not to receive the words of those who come with a message that contradicts the special points of our faith. They gather together a mass of scripture, and pile it as proof around their asserted theories....if such

¹⁶⁷ *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 578. (Italics supplied.)

application moves one pillar from the foundation that God has sustained these fifty years, it is a great mistake.”¹⁶⁸

In the alpha, one of the severest problems was misuse of scripture. Ballenger in particular amassed scriptures in such a confusing way that even the plainest Bible truths became obscured, which leaves us with a valuable lesson for the future.

Misuse of scripture is not new. It began in Eden. “And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”¹⁶⁹ On that day in Eden when humanity lost paradise, the serpent approached Eve with a fascinating argument. In substance, his reasoning went like this:

“I recognize that you have heard the word of God, Eve. We both know that. *But did you interpret it correctly?* You think that God said there is death in this tree. It is obvious that this is incorrect, because I have eaten it, and *I* am not dead.

“Not only am I still alive; I have been elevated to a new level of existence. My mind is now one with God. I can see things that only He could see before. Eve, you must *reinterpret* God’s word based on this newly discovered, provable scientific evidence.”

Eve had encountered the first higher critic of the Word of God.

Higher criticism rejects the idea that the Bible is its own best interpreter, and insists that scholars should interpret it, using cultural and humanistic analyses to decide what the Bible writers “*really*” meant. It thus seeks to “reinterpret” God’s word based on human evidence and human reason, and in so doing it can make some of the plainest truths in Scripture suddenly obscure. As in the case of Eve, if one does not know all the facts such arguments can seem superficially convincing. Eve couldn’t argue with the snake; the thing *was* alive. The

¹⁶⁸ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 161; see also *Loma Linda Messages*, p. 150.

¹⁶⁹ Genesis 3:1.

only weapon she had with which to defend herself was faith—faith in exactly what God had said to her, even though for the moment she couldn't harmonize that with her senses. She abandoned faith and chose to follow human reason, and the result is history.

The Christian world is littered with denominations that once were bulwarks of Protestant clarity, but that now seem to have lost all sense of direction. Standards are collapsing; moral issues are no longer clear. Situational ethics have replaced moral absolutes. And one of the chief causes is historical criticism of the Bible, reducing the clear meaning of God's word to a confusing jumble of academic theories.

Could it happen in Adventism? Misuse of the Word was an issue in 1905. It may well be a danger to look out for in the future.

Mysticism

If one were to name all the doctrinal errors from which Adventism ought to be immune, mysticism might very well head the list. The idea of some mystic fusion between man and God—often done in trance-like “meditation”—is about as foreign to Adventist worship style as the dark side of the moon. Yet in the alpha, mysticism established a momentary foothold among some of the most prominent Adventists of the era. Adventism bumped into an early variant of New Age!

“One and another come to me, asking me to explain the positions taken in ‘Living Temple,’ Ellen White wrote. ‘I reply, ‘They are unexplainable’....error is made to appear as truth....in so pleasing a way that unless care is taken, many will be misled. *We need not the mysticism that is in this book.*”

Then she added a warning that sends chills up one's back: “Those who entertain these sophistries will soon find themselves in a position where the enemy can *talk* with them....”¹⁷⁰

¹⁷⁰ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, pp. 51-52. (Italics supplied.)

In other words, in the alpha crisis some Adventist people were indulging in a practice that could lead to actual communications from the occult!

It is worth remembering that during this period she openly warned that in the struggle for the church, supernatural beings had entered the fight. "Satan is....playing the game of life for human souls. *His angels are mingling with men, and instructing them in the mysteries of evil. These fallen angels will draw away disciples after them, will talk with men....leading souls into paths of deception.*"¹⁷¹ Satan was now calling in forces from the world of darkness, and in the name of "new light," human beings were unwittingly allying with the powers of evil.

There can hardly be anything more unnerving than the thought that one has talked with fallen angels. Yet this seems to have been a real danger in the alpha—and the entry point appears to have been mysticism.

Mysticism figures prominently in eastern religions. It can be defined simply as a quest for hidden wisdom, and its goal is union with the divine. If, in that definition, you hear overtones of Lucifer in Eden, you are probably hearing correctly: "in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods."¹⁷²

That alone ought to be enough to warn any Adventist away from it. Ellen White had plenty to say about the dangers inherent in this doorway to the occult. "Human reasonings and the *imaginings* of the human heart are undermining the inspiration of the Word of God," causing otherwise clear Bible truths to be "surrounded by a cloud of *mysticism*....This is one of the marked signs of the last days."¹⁷³

In the above quote, notice the word *imaginings*. I have emphasized it for a reason. The imagination—

¹⁷¹ Ellen G. White manuscript 145, 1905. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁷² Genesis 3:5.

¹⁷³ *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 15. (Italics supplied.)

“imaging,” if you will—is a prominent way in which mystical meditation is practiced. We normally think of mysticism as associated with eastern religions, but its scope is much wider. It has turned up even in some professed Christian faiths, masquerading as Christian “meditation.”

And now it is time to return to our fascinating acquaintance Íñigo de Loyola, who, at the start of our book, was founding the Jesuit Order. You will recall that at the time when the Reformation was sweeping Europe, Loyola engineered the powerful Counter-Reformation, reclaiming much of Europe for the papacy. The power behind his discipline was mysticism.

Early in life, Loyola had been a soldier. Severely injured with a wound that gave him a permanent limp, he left the military and ultimately turned to religious life as a priest. Troubled by guilt from a past that may have seen more than its share of soldierly indiscretions, he sought in vain for peace of mind. Like Martin Luther—who was fighting the same uncertainties at almost exactly the same time—he was tempted to doubt whether he could find forgiveness. At that point, had he and Luther chanced to meet, they might very well have fallen into each other’s arms.

That event never occurred. Instead, each man found his own solution, and they were very different. Luther discovered the power of faith, and Loyola resolved his doubt through mystical meditation. Soon he was seeing “visions.” What he had encountered, as he practiced this cabalistic art, was some force out in the supernatural.

Luther believed the Word. Loyola believed his visions. And the two would confront each other on opposite sides of the great battle called the Reformation.¹⁷⁴

Loyola’s whole religious life centered around his meditation. He is said to have believed that he had

¹⁷⁴ J.H. Merle D’Aubigne, D.D., *History of the Reformation*. (Glasgow: William Collins, 1846), vol. 3, pp. 103-105. (Author’s personal library.)

revelations from God every day, and he began to share his technique with other priests. They, too, discovered a strange power in mysticism, a discipline that enabled them to deny discomfort, inconvenience, even pain for the sake of promulgating their beliefs. This nucleus of priests was Loyola's "little company" that would become the Jesuit Order.

He authored a volume that is still in print, entitled *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, a series of meditations by which one is supposed to purge the soul and find oneness with God. The ultimate goal is the "assimilation of the soul to God,"¹⁷⁵ a clearly mystical attempt at divine-human union.

Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* are one of the opening steps in becoming a Jesuit. For prolonged periods, often thirty days, the initiate is required to maintain complete silence. He spends hours in mystical meditation, under the control of a director, and within a month his mind has begun to accept the concept of absolute submission. Many have written about this process, but the most fascinating description I can find comes from Malachi Martin, who himself was initiated into the Jesuit Order. Martin says that after undergoing the rigors of the *Spiritual Exercises*, "Each man emerged from that weeks-long regimen as a spiritual fighter *completely won over to warfare...an utterly obedient* servant of the pope."¹⁷⁶

Even when done in a supposedly Christian setting, mystical meditation follows a protocol very similar to eastern forms. A person maintains silence and progressively relaxes the body. The mind is emptied of external thoughts, and focused on some event in the Bible. Using that event as a topic for "meditation," one next seeks to "image" it by using his or her imagination. A landscape is pictured in the mind, with color, texture, even weather. Into this scene one now introduces people,

¹⁷⁵ *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius* (New York: Image Books, 1989), from the introduction by Robert W. Gleason, S.J., pp. 14, 15.

¹⁷⁶ Martin, *The Jesuits*, p. 160. (Italics supplied.)

imagining that they are Bible characters.

Now the process takes a quantum leap into the bizarre. The person who is “meditating” starts a conversation with the people he has imaged. He asks them questions; they answer. Often, in this sort of “meditation,” the person you are imaging is supposed to be Jesus. Which leads to an interesting question: if you are “talking” with “Jesus,” then aren’t you receiving a truth equal to Scripture?

Those who practice this art claim that the answer is yes!

We are told that we should meditate. How, then, does one distinguish between mystical “meditation” and the genuine thing? I propose a very simple test: are you using your conscious mind to think about truths the Bible has clearly revealed? If so, you are practicing Christian meditation.

Or are you trying to “create” scenes that the Bible never specifically described—and in the process, perhaps, accessing not your conscious mind but something in the subconscious? If this is the case, you are closer to Zen than you are to Adventism.

Now reflect on Ellen White’s warning regarding mysticism. “Those who entertain these sophistries will soon find themselves in a position *where the enemy can talk with them*....”¹⁷⁷ Was she tilting at windmills? Or is there something very real here to be concerned about? If you believe that you can create a Bible character out of your imagination, talk with him or her, and get a truth equal to scripture, it seems evident that you have opened the door for communication from someone.

But whom?

Is there a possibility that mysticism was the door through which, in 1904, Adventists were being challenged by beings from the world of darkness?

If so, and if alpha is a model for omega, then is there

¹⁷⁷ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, p. 52. (Italics supplied.)

a danger that we could again be foolish enough to dabble with this entry vestibule to the occult?

It would irresponsible to rule it out. Notice that in Kellogg's era, some of the brightest minds in the church fell for a variant of mysticism. Kellogg was one of the most gifted physicians this church has ever had. He fell unsuspectingly into the trap. So did senior church workers, who should have known better. Today we have a term for all of this: New Age. Ellen White had another term for it, even better: spiritualism. It is worth remembering that spiritualism is one of the three evil forces depicted in Revelation as deceiving the world at the end of time. It would be naive to assume that this monster might not seek entrance into Adventism.

Should this bizarre problem ever appear again, it would be wise to remember alpha—and think about omega.

False Claims of “Reform” and “Reorganization”

Proponents of the alpha claimed to have a reform message for the church. There is a terrible danger in misidentifying this point, because both the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy call for revival and reformation. Adventists are a reform-minded people; hence, if the enemy comes to them through this avenue there is a possibility they might be more easily deceived. Fortunately there is a test by which one can tell true reform from false: Does the new teaching urge reform of life, in accordance with established truth? If so, it has to be genuine. If, on the other hand, it urges abandonment of established truths, it is not reform at all. It is an attempt to mutate Adventism.

In *Selected Messages*, Ellen White warns about spurious reform and spurious calls for “reorganization”:

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great *reformation* was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith, and engaging in a process of

reorganization....Our religion would be changed.... A new organization would be established....Nothing would be allowed to stand in the way of the new movement."¹⁷⁸

Special Targeting of the Youth

The young person is the most tempting target for anyone who is trying to foment change. So it was in Kellogg's era, and his forces made all the right moves. They involved the youth in the sale of his book. They opened a college to attract young people. They used bright, charismatic thought leaders in their appeal to the young. They actively recruited the youth by sending representatives out to invite them to Battle Creek.

The results were heart-broken letters from parents to Ellen White, telling of children who had given up the faith. Could this problem ever arise again? Ellen White gives us some objective tests by which to judge.

1. At Battle Creek College, some "leaders and teachers" did not understand "the real groundwork of our faith."¹⁷⁹
2. Students apparently graduated from Battle Creek with little understanding of Adventist truths; they were so poorly grounded that "many" needed "to learn the first principals of present truth."¹⁸⁰
3. Not all the instructors at Battle Creek were "safe, reliable teachers;" indeed, some of them would "leaven" the youth with "misrepresentations" about the Spirit of Prophecy and the work of the church.¹⁸¹
4. Some in Battle Creek had personally "rejected light," and hence had become "Satan's decoys, to lead souls away from the truth."¹⁸²

¹⁷⁸ *Selected Messages*, Book I, p. 204, 205; see also Battle Creek Letters, p. 81. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁷⁹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, p. 21.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁸² *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 34.

5. Some actually "hated" the Spirit of Prophecy, and refused to follow it.¹⁸³
6. Those who "tear down the foundation that God has laid are not to be accepted as teachers."¹⁸⁴ Elsewhere she cautioned that anyone who presents theories that lead people away from the sanctuary truth "should not be accepted as a teacher."¹⁸⁵
7. And finally, there was the fruits test. She received letters from various parents whose children had lost their faith on the Battle Creek Campus.¹⁸⁶

Should any of these, or a combination of them, ever reappear, one might wonder whether a repetition of the past was occurring. At the least, parents might think about Ellen White's warning from the alpha: "Parents, keep your children away from Battle Creek...If your children are in Battle Creek, call them away without delay."¹⁸⁷

Use of Manipulative Techniques

Manipulation of people is one of the more sinister aspects of the alpha. Techniques were used that were apparently sophisticated even by today's standards, and which can be seen in some of the pop-psychology methods of today. Some of the best minds in the church were affected by mechanisms which Ellen White identified as being of satanic origin, and their use was apparently accompanied by a very strong satanic presence. She described "evil angels" taking Kellogg's mind "captive" at one point; others seemed "powerless" to escape once they had subjected themselves to this sort of force.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

¹⁸⁵ Ellen G. White manuscript 125, 1907; see also Ellen G. White, *The Upward Look* (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982) p. 199.

¹⁸⁶ Ellen G. White manuscript 20, 1906.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

Mrs. White warned that a repetition of such manipulative techniques would be seen as we near the close of probation. But in focusing on threats that might come from others, are we overlooking an even larger threat that we routinely allow into our homes?

In Chapter 4 we talked about television commercials and the way they operate on the mind: rapidly changing scenes, with sophisticated lens techniques and a powerful soundtrack designed to sweep you along before you have time to think. Now consider what happens when the commercials end and your favorite program resumes. Many of the manipulative techniques remain. As the camera angles and scenes change, you have to adjust to a new view as often as twenty times a minute. All of this, of course, heightens the drama, so that the actors on the screen—even when engaging in the most ordinary events—do so with a flair that simply doesn't exist in ordinary life. Couple this with the fact that television casting offices can take their pick of the most beautiful and interesting people in the world. The result? After watching three or four hours of this, your own life may not seem as interesting as it was before. Your home, your job, possibly your spouse, can't compete with the artificial intensity seen on television. Unless you have an unusually strong sense of identity, you may find yourself dissatisfied with your own life and wishing you could duplicate the identity of the actors on the screen. *Thus, television has the capacity to rob you of something God has custom-built for you: your own unique identity.*

Perhaps that is a reason why, from its earliest moments, Adventism took a stand with respect to entertainment. Aside from the fact that Hollywood can waste a lot of your time and expose you to objectionable scenes, there may be something deeper to be concerned about. Most movies that portray a fictionalized, larger-than-life hero or heroine can end up assaulting your sense of just how special your own life is.

For just two weeks, try something. Turn off the television—*after* you have watched the news! Open the

Word of God. Get a Strong's Concordance, a good Bible dictionary, and some good maps of the Holy Land in Bible times. Now, begin to read—one verse at a time, comparing scripture with scripture, while the Bible dictionary and the maps provide you with extra depth in understanding the people and places you are meeting in the Bible. And then review the sections of the Spirit of Prophecy that cover what you've studied in the Bible.

You may find that television can't compete.

The study of God's word can become habit forming.

A False Revival

As the end draws near, God's people will be blessed with an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Filled with the Spirit, believers will witness to the world in one last mighty demonstration of the power of the gospel. Long have God's people waited for this event, and Ellen White describes it with a wonderful promise found in *The Great Controversy*, p. 464.

“Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth, there will be, among the people of the Lord, such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His word. Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time, to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming.”

That event will herald the last great work of the church, a final witness to the world. *But just before it occurs, Ellen White warns, the devil will try to obscure it with a counterfeit!*

“The enemy of souls desires to hinder this work; and *before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it, by introducing a counterfeit.*

In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power, he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit. *Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world.*" (*Ibid.*, italics supplied.)

The apostasy she here describes is a false revival, masquerading as the work of the Holy Spirit. Whole churches will believe that they have an outpouring of the Spirit, and there will seem to be "great religious interest." How does one identify a counterfeit that clever?

There is, of course, the test of Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." However convincing something may seem to be, if it does not uphold the standard of God's law it is a counterfeit. But there is another test. A false revival will depart from the simplicity of Scriptural truth and use the methods of the world.

"I am instructed that...men will try to bring strange performances into the work of God," Ellen White declared, and she warned that "Not one jot or tittle of anything theatrical is to be brought into our work."

"Ministers in the sacred desk have no license to behave like theatrical performers...They do not occupy the sacred desk as actors, but as teachers of solemn truths."¹⁸⁸

Elsewhere, Ellen White gives a description of a false revival in which people will claim to have the Holy Spirit.

"Just before the close of probation," she warned, there would be "shouting, with drums, music, and dancing. The senses of rational beings will become so confused

¹⁸⁸ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism* (Washington: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1946), pp. 137, 640.

that they cannot be trusted to make right decisions. *And this is called the moving of the Holy Spirit.*

“The Holy Spirit never reveals itself in such methods, in such a bedlam of noise. This is an *invention of Satan*....A bedlam of noise shocks the senses...The powers of satanic agencies *blend with the din and noise*, to have a carnival, and *this is termed the Holy Spirit’s working.*”¹⁸⁹

Across the rolling landscape of the centuries, the words re-echo, as vivid as when they were first uttered over eight hundred years before the birth of Christ: “Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly:

“Gather the people, sanctify the congregation...Let the priests, the ministers of the LORD, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O LORD....”¹⁹⁰

Loss of Institutions

In the alpha, the church lost a major institution, its flagship health care facility. Could this happen again? Every Adventist who loves this church should pray that we never again experience this sort of tragic loss. But it has happened before, and we cannot ignore the lessons of history.

IV

Thus far we have explored thirteen factors that were evident in the alpha crisis. Each contains lessons that can help prepare us for omega. But there is one more. At the very end, Satan will hurl one last deception specifically at Adventism. He will tempt us to doubt the gift of the Spirit of Prophecy.

¹⁸⁹ *Selected Messages*, Book 2, p. 36. (Italics supplied.)

¹⁹⁰ Joel 2:15-17.

Chapter 8

“The Very Last Deception of Satan”

I

“**T**he very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God...There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic.”¹⁹¹

The last deception thrown at Seventh-day Adventists by General Lucifer will be an attack on the Spirit of Prophecy. Like the allied attacks on Baghdad’s radar sites, it is a tactical strike, designed to blind us. If we let that happen, chances are we will fail to recognize *omega*.

“In the book ‘Living Temple’ there is presented the alpha of deadly heresies. The omega will follow, and *will be received by those who are not willing to heed the warning God has given.*”¹⁹²

As one stops to think about it, that is not really surprising: that is exactly where the alpha began.

¹⁹¹ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 48.

¹⁹² *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, p. 50; see also *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 200. (Italics supplied.)

II

Cut it any way you want to, and one fact still comes to the top: the alpha crisis had its roots in a neglect of the Spirit of Prophecy. This disaster did not happen suddenly; it was the end-product of years of carelessness that led, in the end, to a tragic apostasy. Before the denomination ever faced the final, dizzying plunge into debt and doctrinal crisis, there were repeated warnings from the pen of E. G. White.

"No selfishness, no personal ambition, is to be allowed to enter into the work of selecting locations for our sanitariums," the church was told in 1902. "It is the Lord's will that these institutions shall be established outside the city."

This advice went directly contrary to the preferences of some very powerful factions in the church, but it wasn't based on caprice; there was a *reason* for it, connected with the church's objective of health evangelism. Surrounded by nature, Ellen White said, "patients will be more readily influenced by the Spirit of God...their souls will be uplifted....Relief will come to body and mind. 'Out of the cities' is my message. Our physicians ought to have been wide awake on this point long ago."¹⁹³

All of that quaint advice, so out-of-step with the grand program at Battle Creek, was blithely brushed aside because it didn't seem to fit the business conventions of the day. But ironically, embedded within it was an issue that would be headline news in the late Twentieth Century, when a near-bankrupt America would discover that it couldn't afford the cost of its own illnesses: "The longer patients can be kept out of doors," Ellen White declared, "*the less care will they require.*"¹⁹⁴

For this attorney, who has represented two hospitals and seen the problems faced by the modern health care

¹⁹³ *Testimonies*, Vol. 7, pp. 81-83.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 82. (Italics supplied.)

industry, that sentence fairly leaps off the page. There is even a phrase in current health management vernacular that covers the concept Ellen White is describing. It is called *length of stay*. The longer a patient needs hospital care, the greater the cost burden on the health care system. Get the patient discharged sooner, and you save the system precious money. Under the Federal DRG program, get patients out sooner, and the hospital you are running may just make enough profit to stay afloat.

In other words, in 1902 Ellen White was describing the answer to the trillion dollar question: how to deliver the highest quality care at the lowest possible cost! And Adventism could have provided that answer!

In that same year, 1902, just as the denomination was deciding, against divine counsel, to undertake an expensive building program at Battle Creek, she gave some advice on hospital management that was worth listening to:

“God does not want any of His servants to enter into unnecessary, expensive undertakings, *which bring debt upon the people*....So long as those who claim to believe the truth for this time walk in the way of the Lord....they may expect that the Lord will give them prosperity. But when they choose to wander from the narrow way, they bring ruin upon themselves and upon those who look to them for guidance.”¹⁹⁵

Debt: she warned against the monster that would jeopardize many hospital systems in the turbulent future; for those who cared to listen to it, her advice was like reading tomorrow’s stock market figures today. Jehoshaphat once put it into an exquisitely simple sentence: “Believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper.”

Shortly thereafter, she gave still more advice that might have saved many a heartache (and quite a few lost souls). “I have been repeatedly shown that it is not wise to erect mammoth institutions...A mammoth sanitarium

¹⁹⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, pp. 90-91. (Italics supplied.)

requires many workers....*it is exceedingly difficult to maintain a high standard of spirituality.*"¹⁹⁶

One need only look at subsequent events in Battle Creek to see if she was correct. Today the visitor to Battle Creek encounters, on entering the city, an enormous ghost: a huge, towered building that looms above the skyline—Kellogg's building, undertaken with brave gusto just before the Depression brought a final chapter to the sad apostasy at Battle Creek. When an institution loses its spirituality, it is sooner or later lost to the work of God. That building now serves as office and storage space for the federal government.

III

The apostasy in Battle Creek is a classic case study of how rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy progresses and where it ultimately leads. At first her testimonies were met with benign neglect: it wasn't necessary to argue with the woman, so long as one could just ignore what she said. But as the crisis deepened and some people could see the problems that had been caused by rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy, opposing sides began to develop. Some supported Ellen White; others attacked her. Once that occurred, rejection of the Spirit of Prophecy took a new and more aggressive turn. All sorts of intrigue went on in the effort to prove her wrong. Her own nephew sought to trick her into issuing a false testimony; the ploy failed. Kellogg repeatedly charged that her supposed visions were fueled by information provided her by others. Powerful and influential people began compiling something called the "Blue Book," designed to discredit her.

Others, who dared not be so open, undermined her in subtler ways. "Very adroitly some have been working to make of no effect the Testimonies of warning and reproof that have stood the test for half a century. At the

¹⁹⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 102, 103. (Italics supplied.)

same time, they deny doing any such thing."¹⁹⁷

Notice that there is a difference between outright, open opposition, and subtle twists that can make God's messages of "no effect." She describes a paradox. Some people were skillfully destroying the effectiveness of the Spirit of Prophecy while superficially claiming to believe it.

The battle waxed hot enough to make the front page of at least one Chicago newspaper. Resurrecting Dudley Canright's old argument, her foes raised an issue that has been seen nearly every time someone felt threatened by the Spirit of Prophecy: you couldn't take the woman too seriously, they argued, because she was a "plagiarist."

IV

What about the charge of plagiarism? Is Ellen White not inspired because, like many Bible writers, she chose to use the well-expressed ideas of other people? That question is worth a moment of legal analysis.

No copyright is absolute. Even today's Federal Copyright Act provides, in Section 107, that under proper circumstances a writer may use portions of another writer's copyrighted material. The legal principle governing this is called the doctrine of "Fair Use," and it goes back to the earliest era of American copyright law. In fact it goes back to the mid-1840's, when Ellen White began to write.

In the 1840's, when she first began to record her visions, writers routinely copied extensively from each other. It was a custom one repeatedly sees when reading newspapers and publications of the era, and the use of one writer's material by another was recognized by the courts. In 1845, Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story decided a case in which plagiarism was the issue. In the course of that opinion, he gave so clear a summary of

¹⁹⁷ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, p. 31.

that era's copyright law that it is worth a moment of our time.

A writer, says Justice Story, "may have borrowed much of his materials from others, but if they are....real improvements upon the existing modes, he is entitled to a copyright...

"Every book in literature, science and art, borrows, *and must necessarily borrow*.....No man creates a new language for himself, at least if he be a wise man....The thoughts of every man are, more or less, a combination of what other men have thought and expressed, although they may be modified, exalted, or improved by his own genius or reflection."¹⁹⁸

Let's be sure we understand what Justice Story was saying. The use of someone else's literary work is privileged so long as one is doing his or her own genuine research, and is using one's own inventiveness to produce something new and creative.

Now, to the point: in using materials previously written by others, did Ellen White make genuine creative improvements, of the sort described by Justice Story? Let me give one example; you can judge for yourself.

In 1842, a writer named John Harris published a book on the life of Christ entitled *The Great Teacher*. On page 51 he pens the following sentence:

"He could have uttered a single sentence, which, by furnishing a key to many a mystery, and affording a glimpse of arcana before unknown, would have collected and concentrated around it the busy thoughts of each successive generation to the close of time."

This is classic, tortured Victorian prose. Ellen White has been accused of using that sentence in *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 237. If she did, notice what she did with it:

¹⁹⁸ Federal Cases, Circuit and District Courts of the United States, Case No. 4,436. Cited as 8 Federal Cases 615. (Italics supplied.) Rehearing denied, 8 Federal Cases 626, Case No. 4437.

“He could have opened mysteries which patriarchs and prophets desired to look into, which human curiosity has been impatiently desirous of understanding.”

Is that clearer? It is an improvement? Is it creative? If so, then it perfectly fits the description of good writing found in Justice Story’s opinion.

And there is an even more important question: is it *true*? If so, then we had better accept it, just as we accept other borrowed literature in the Bible. Revelation repeatedly seems to use language that one can find in the non-canonical book of Enoch. Paul quotes individuals like Aratus and Menander—and adapts some of their ideas in scripture. Jesus, in giving the Golden Rule, was using a thought first articulated by Rabbi Hillel. (He also borrowed from pagan sources to meet the minds of His hearers when giving the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, a fact ignored by those who use this parable to “prove” that we go somewhere at death). If we allow ourselves to be preoccupied with the source of language rather than its truth, we will ultimately find ourselves doubting Scripture itself. And we will have repeated the sad stories of people who, in the tragedy called the alpha, lost their way.

V

Sooner or later, every Christian will have to come to terms with an issue that cannot be ignored: is the gift of prophecy a vital characteristic of God’s end-time church?

The Bible is replete with promises that just before Jesus comes, the gift of prophecy will be seen in the church. Joel 2:28 puts it this way:

“And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions:

“And also upon the servants and upon the *handmaids*

in those days will I pour out my spirit."¹⁹⁹

Joel makes it clear, in the next two verses, that this is an end-time prophecy, for an end-time people.

"And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.

"The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, *before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come.*"

Before the coming of Christ, Joel says, the church will be blessed with the gift of prophecy. His words are reechoed in Acts 2:18. Paul, in I Corinthians 1:16 indicates that the "testimony of Christ" is given to the church "So that ye come behind in no gift; *waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*" And Revelation 12:17 makes it clear that God's last church, the one that faces the wrath of Satan, has both the law of God and the "testimony of Jesus."

There is simply no avoiding the point: a recurrent theme in the Bible is the certainty that at the end of time, the gift of prophecy will be a part of the true church.

Actually, that is not surprising, considering the pattern God has established throughout history. A review of Bible history discloses an unvarying pattern: *every time God has prophetically predicted a future event of any importance, He has also raised up a prophet to herald that event when it was about to happen.*

In the morning of human history, God found it necessary to destroy the earth with a flood. Before sending it, he used the gift of prophecy to warn the world of its onset. Noah preached this message, and almost certainly Enoch did, too. The event was foretold a full 120 years in advance.

But when the time for the flood drew near, God did not leave the world without one last prophetic warning. By this time Enoch had been translated, but Noah remained, a living prophet, to give a final appeal.

¹⁹⁹ Joel 2:28, 29. (Italics supplied.)

In Genesis 15, Israel's long captivity in Egypt was revealed to Abraham long before it happened. Along with this came a prophecy of Israel's deliverance. And when the time came for the Exodus, the Lord raised up another prophet, in the person of Moses.

Moses, in turn, prophesied the captivity of Israel should they disobey. When they failed God, and the Babylonian captivity was about to occur, God again spoke to His people through prophets like Jeremiah. In turn, Jeremiah predicted their eventual return to Jerusalem, and when the time came for that to happen, God raised up men like Ezra and Nehemiah to herald the event and help in its fulfillment.

Now consider the first advent of Christ. Repeatedly it had been prophetically foretold in the Old Testament. Before His birth, 400 years of silence passed, in which Israel received no vision from the Lord. But just before Jesus began His ministry, the gift of prophecy reappeared, in the person of John. The world was reminded of the onset of a fulfilling prophecy.

The flood. The bondage and exodus of Israel. Israel's captivity in Babylon. Their release from captivity. The First Advent of Jesus. Each time a major prophecy was nearing fulfillment, God raised up one or more prophets to herald that event, and to remind people that the event was about to occur.

Now to the question honest Christians of every faith must confront: if God raised up prophets to remind people of all these past events, does it make sense to assume that just before the grandest event of all, the Coming of Jesus—before which the whole world will have to make life or death decisions—God will abandon His pattern and leave the world without prophetic guidance?

Such a conclusion doesn't fit. It makes no sense.

Nor is it Biblical. Joel foretold a time, near the end, when the Spirit of Prophecy would return, and among the people upon whom it might fall, he included *handmaids*.

One December day in 1844 a little group of sincere Christian women were praying together. As they prayed, a young woman 17 years of age was suddenly taken in vision beyond the curtain that normally shields the supernatural from our view. Uneducated and in poor health, she was nonetheless instructed to share with others the truths heaven had shown her; not surprisingly, she was bewildered at the assignment.

Even in later life, when she was writing such classics as *The Great Controversy* and *The Desire of Ages*, she would still feel inadequate to the task. "I am but a poor writer," she would say, in Letter 67, 1894, "and cannot trace with voice or pen the great and deep mysteries of God." And so as she began her life of service, she reminded the Lord how poorly prepared she was to be a writer. In response, she later said, the Lord told her to do what any young writer *ought* to do: read—and keep reading. There was much she could learn from the way established writers used language, and in some of their material she would be able to find truths that were well expressed, which she could in turn use to more clearly convey the truths she had to share.

Sometimes, the other writers would be wrong; when that happened, the Lord told her, His Spirit would help her take the truth and leave the error behind.

That, at least, is the account recorded by W. C. White and D. E. Robinson on page 6 of their pamphlet *Brief Statements*, and if we are going to listen to her critics, common fairness suggests that we ought to listen to her side of the story. Now, to the question: Is her explanation believable?

Fortunately for us, there is a way to determine this—with scientific precision. One of the topics she wrote about was health. When she first began writing on the topic, medicine was only a few steps removed from the Dark Ages. Bloodletting was still sometimes practiced, on the theory that disease resulted from too much "vitality." Sick babies were treated with noxious potions

like "antimonial wine," a mixture of alcohol and a nauseating poison that caused the infant to vomit. With their small body mass, few infants could survive that sort of fluid loss and electrolyte imbalance, and the result can be seen in many Nineteenth Century graveyards, where tiny headstones adorned with sculpted lambs disclose an epidemic of infant deaths.

In that era, reeking with medical ignorance, Ellen White gave principles that modern epidemiologists are studying with rapt interest: a lifestyle that can automatically eliminate dietary cholesterol and reduce one's intake of saturated fat; that gives careful Adventist men a seven-fold reduction in the risk of death from heart disease; that offers a risk reduction in a whole spectrum of cancers; that affords an average 6.2 extra years of life.

If, when she was writing in the 1860's, the Holy Spirit did not show her what information to use and what to discard, *then how did she know all this?*

VI

Yet, sadly, even back when God was working through her life with evident supernatural power, the substance of her message was all-too-often ignored. It was this that brought the church into the crisis called the alpha—that cost the loss of a great medical institution and the fiery destruction of the publishing house; that led the church into a financial crisis and then into a nightmarish doctrinal heresy. It was this that cost a golden opportunity to finish the work, and that doomed the world to a long journey into nightmare.

Might attacks on the Spirit of Prophecy be a part of future crises for the church? Yes, according to Ellen White—decidedly so.

"The very last deception of Satan will be to make of none effect the testimony of the Spirit of God....Satan will work ingeniously, in different ways and through

different agencies, to unsettle the confidence of God's remnant people in the true testimony. There will be a hatred kindled against the testimonies which is satanic."²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 48.

Chapter 9

“The Test Will Come to Every Soul”

I

It was one o'clock in the morning, and Ellen White was sitting up, probably using her familiar lapboard for a desk, writing as rapidly as her pen could move over the paper. She usually rose before dawn to begin her work, but this morning, just an hour past midnight, she felt an urgency seldom before experienced. The people of God were headed for a great shaking, a collision with error in which many would lose their way, and she was compelled to give them one last clear view of the danger before it happened.

It had begun earlier that night with a vivid dream that she understood to be a divine message, and the story is best told in her words:

“Shortly before I sent out the testimonies regarding the efforts of the enemy to undermine the foundation of our faith through the dissemination of seductive theories, I had read an incident about a ship in a fog meeting an iceberg. For several nights I slept but little. I seemed to be bowed down as a cart beneath sheaves. One night a scene was clearly presented before me. A vessel was upon the waters, in a

heavy fog. Suddenly the lookout cried, "Iceberg just ahead!" There, towering high above the ship, was a gigantic iceberg. An authoritative voice cried out, "Meet it!" There was not a moment's hesitation. It was a time for instant action. The engineer put on full steam, and the man at the wheel steered the ship straight into the iceberg. With a crash she struck the ice. There was a fearful shock, and the iceberg broke into many pieces, falling with a noise like thunder to the deck. The passengers were violently shaken by the force of the collision, but no lives were lost. The vessel was injured, but not beyond repair. She rebounded from the contact, trembling from stem to stern, like a living creature. Then she moved forward on her way.

"Well I knew the meaning of this representation. I had my orders. I had heard the words, like a voice from our Captain, "Meet it!" I knew what my duty was....For the next few days I worked early and late, preparing for our people the instruction given me regarding the errors that were coming in among us."²⁰¹

For some time Ellen White had been perplexed, wondering what to do about the spurious new ideas Kellogg was urging upon the church. For her, the church was God's greatest treasure on earth. Often it erred, and many times she poured out earnest messages to its leadership, begging for reform. Yet never did her loyalty waver. And now, with Kellogg stirring up division, it seemed that to meet the challenge might provoke a split, resulting in a frightful loss of talent, means, and even souls. It was a decision she found very hard to make.

For many months she had waited, hoping that something she said might touch a responsive chord in Kellogg's heart and still save him for the cause. But there

²⁰¹ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, pp. 55-56. See also *Selected Messages*, Book 1, Pp. 205-206.

was a signal, divinely appointed, by which she could know that the confrontation could be delayed no longer. That would be "when the leaders in Battle Creek made an open raid upon the Testimonies"—when the Spirit of Prophecy came under open attack.

Once, on another occasion, the Lord had faced this issue with His chosen people. For fifteen centuries He had tenderly cared for Israel, giving them chance after chance to fulfill the glorious dream He had for them: holy, healthy, happy people, placed by Him at the crossroads of civilization to be a witness to the world. Yet one day from the Mount of Olives He made it clear that, at last, that opportunity was over. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."²⁰²

Israel had found many ways to depart from God's ideal. But notice that on that sad day on the Mount of Olives, Jesus cited only one sin: rejection of His prophets!

One day in Battle Creek that same mysterious line was crossed. Open attack was made on the Spirit of Prophecy—which is, after all, one of the defining features of the remnant church. When that happened, heaven sent a message to Ellen White, clothed in the symbolism of an off-course ship about to hit an iceberg. "Brethren," she wrote, "we now face the issue. 'Meet it' with all the strength and power of God." The issue was joined; the church went out to engage the enemy, and in the words of Ellen White, drawing from the imagery of Gideon, "the pitchers were broken, and the light shone forth in clear rays."²⁰³

Thus did the church endure a terrible shaking at the time of the Kellogg apostasy. Like a ship imperiled by

²⁰² Matthew 23:37-38.

²⁰³ Ellen G. White letter 328, 1906.

ice, it had at last only one option: a head-on collision. The impact was stunning. People were shaken. The vessel itself was injured, "but not beyond repair." The church survived.

II

The idea of a great shaking, in which members are lost to the cause, is a prediction Adventists have pondered for many decades. Somewhere, sometime, God's church will again be shaken. And as world shadows lengthen, heralding the evident approach of the Advent, it is vital that we think the matter through. The shaking is out there somewhere; people will be lost in it. How will we recognize its onset? And when it comes, what should we do?

One of the most recognizable features of the shaking will be its cause. This crisis will be brought about by false doctrine, and those most at risk will be those who have neglected to study. "When the shaking comes, *by the introduction of false theories....* surface readers, anchored nowhere, are like shifting sand."²⁰⁴

The errors embedded in this event apparently will prey on even the brightest and best. Indeed, some of the brightest lights in Adventism will go out during the stress of this ordeal. "The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul.... Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat."²⁰⁵

Ellen White warns of an oncoming time of "perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect... Every wind of doctrine will be blowing." In that era, neither genius nor talent will

²⁰⁴ Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers* (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1923), p. 112. (Italics supplied.)

²⁰⁵ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 81.

be a match for the subtleties of error, and she makes that point in a statement filled with tragic overtones: “In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged.”²⁰⁶

All of which leaves one puzzled. Of all the generations in the history of the world, we are the most richly blessed with truth. Never has the Bible been more understandable. In the lap-top computer I am using to prepare this book, I have three versions of the Bible, Strong's concordance, Vine's, Englishman's, a Bible dictionary, and some of the best Bible maps I have ever seen. With two or three keyboard strokes I can access information that took me hours to accumulate only a few years ago. In the same little computer I have over a hundred titles from the Spirit of Prophecy, available for instant research anywhere I happen to be. *Informed?* Never have people had so much truth available.

Yet those same sources—the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy—predict a time when stars we have admired will go out, and errors will appear capable of deceiving, if possible, the very elect. How could error come packaged cleverly enough to confuse people like that?

Ellen White provides an answer, in a testimony we have already explored in this book. It is worth a second look.

“The enemy of souls has sought to bring in the supposition that a great reformation was to take place among Seventh-day Adventists, and that this reformation would consist in giving up the doctrines which stand as the pillars of our faith....The principles of truth that God in His wisdom has given to the remnant church, would be discarded. Our religion would be changed....A new organization would be established. *Books of a new order would be written. A system of intellectual philosophy would be introduced.* The founders of this system would go into the cities, and do a wonderful work. The Sabbath, of course, would be lightly regarded...”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁶ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 80.

²⁰⁷ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, Pp. 54, 55. (Italics supplied.)

Perhaps in those last three sentences we get the answer to a puzzling question—how even literate, end-time Adventists could fall for this deception in such large numbers. *Intellectual philosophy*. The enemy does not attack Adventism clumsily, with some crude assault that might frighten even casual Adventists back to Revelation 13. This ploy is custom-fitted for the Adventist with a graduate degree and a three car garage. It comes wrapped in philosophical intellectualism, an approach expressly designed for the bright, well-educated person, and to round out its credentials, it even affects concern over social ills as it goes into the cities to do a “wonderful work.” But in those cities, hovering on the border of eternity, its “wonderful work” includes little reference to the Sabbath, for the Sabbath is only “lightly regarded.”

One has to wonder how people could do a “wonderful work” in the cities, which sounds like some kind of humanitarian outreach, while at the same time “lightly regarding” the Sabbath. We are told that helping others is a proper use of Sabbath hours; rescuing an ox that had fallen into a ditch was considered proper Sabbath observance even by the legalistic pharisees. Yet Ellen White’s warning about careless Sabbath observance immediately follows her description of some kind of city work, thus linking the two ideas.

Is it possible that people could grow careless with standards even while trying to “help” others? Sure, Jesus healed on the Sabbath. But healing is a very spiritual ministry. And the ox in the ditch is an emergency. It is one thing to tow a stranded motorist to help on Sabbath; quite another to go into the inner city and teach a Sabbath class on auto mechanics—or to do routine work like house painting. If, at the end of time, we are going to be telling even the poor that we would rather face a death decree than work on the Sabbath, how will they react when they remember that, back when we were “witnessing,” we did ordinary work on Sabbath without a qualm? I’ve *done* work for the poor, providing pro-bono legal representation in the inner city and serving

on the board of directors for legal aid, and I can tell you from personal experience the poor are not as simple as we like to think they are. They may be short of money, but they are not dumb. In fact, they are often very sharp of mind—plenty sharp enough to see inconsistencies, even though we've gotten too jaded to do so ourselves.

Could it be that in a general climate of carelessness about standards—occasioned, perhaps, by the teaching that you 'can't keep the law anyway'—people will become so befuddled that even in their "outreach" they will no longer clearly see what is proper Sabbath observance? Ellen White seems to suggest it.

III

There are philosophical ideas, sharpened by centuries of thought, which few Adventists are prepared to handle. Kellogg bumped into one, and the indications are that he never knew what hit him. To the end, he insisted that he was a believing Christian who just had clearer insights into the nature of God, and many of his ideas were superficially quite charming. A whole generation of Adventist thought leaders were swept away by the fascinating notion that God's very person might be as close as the material world around us, and that the Holy Spirit came into us physically in health reform's good, fresh air. In departing from the literal clarity of the Word of God, and veering off into philosophical speculation, Dr. Kellogg found even his gifted brain far over its depth. For that reason, if someone really wanted to sabotage Adventism he would probably introduce some form of philosophical speculation that, on a level unrecognized by most people, would be utterly inconsistent with Adventist truth.

In the morning of human life, a woman with a brain hand-made by God confronted this challenge in Eden. She made the mistake of flirting with philosophical arguments tossed at her from the mind of a fallen angel, and even her awesome intellect couldn't handle it. Even

Jesus didn't dally with Lucifer; in the wilderness, His only response to the devil was Scripture.

Over the centuries humanity has toyed with this temptation: Cain, who wanted to rewrite the mechanism of salvation to make it more "relevant" to his life and work; the first Babylonians, who cherished doubt and decided that their minds (and bodies) were equal to a climb to heaven. The Greeks fell for this, as did the Romans, and soon after the First Century, a fascination with philosophy overcame even those who called themselves Christians. It is this, the temptation to use reason beyond its design limits, that I believe is part of what the Bible calls "Babylon."

At the end of time, confronted by supernatural events no one can humanly explain, we will have to deny even our senses and depend on faith alone. That is what would have saved Eve. Instead, confronted by apparent scientific evidence that she couldn't explain, she made the mistake of abandoning simple faith in what God had plainly said. She tried to "reinterpret" the Word. And that, I fear, is the danger embedded in Ellen White's end-time warning for the church.

It explains everything. Why the brightest and best fail. Why we get confused on truths as clear as the sanctuary and the Sabbath. And why such antagonism will develop toward Ellen White. You can't "reinterpret" her by claiming that she spoke only for some distant era; what she had to say was clear, and (like all prophetic writing) it sometimes cuts.

It cuts—right through our excuses, leaving us without a psychological defense to the most basic truth in all scripture: redemption is an escape from sin.

IV

What Ellen White describes is astounding. Abandonment of pillar doctrines. Discarding of established truth. A "change" in our religion. Replacement of historic Adventism with intellectual

philosophy. Quiet abandonment of the Sabbath. *Nothing* about this is left to chance—not even the way in which it is promulgated to the church. “Books of a new order” are scattered across Adventism, an apt way to describe a media campaign to capture the loyalties of a majority. Evidently authority figures “emerge,” turning out a blizzard of material to convince Adventists that it is time for something “new.” And this is apparently done with determined force, for “nothing is allowed to stand in the way of this new movement.”

Much as one might wish to, one cannot dismiss this as an accident. This is not a mere random force of history bumping by chance against Adventism. *This* is planned. As in the alpha, something very bad is happening here. Someone—or something—is trying to seize control of the church. And as Ellen White describes it, the plan centers its attack on our brightest and our best.

Now for the strangest coincidence of all: this plan, disclosed so long ago by Mrs. White, is almost identical to a plan I read in a recently written book, designed to erase the Reformation and reunite all of Christendom under the “protection” of the Pope.

V

As this book began, we saw Pope Paul III facing the inexorable challenge of the Reformation. As he watched his Catholic world shrink, he desperately needed some force to counteract the reformers who had taken so much of Europe from his control. And on a September day in 1540 he found that force in a handful of kneeling men, who promised to go anywhere he ordered, at any time, no questions asked. Thus was born the Jesuit Order.

I have to confess that I have long been fascinated with this very special group of priests who love their faith and who (usually, but not always!) live such disciplined lives. I know them better than most. While I did not attend a Jesuit campus, many of my graduate

school classmates were Jesuit trained. They were formidable competition.

And—I'll have to admit it—I have a fondness for these people; not because I agree with them, but because I respect discipline and competence. I am not going to raise the suggestion, sometimes heard, that they are throughout our church. Putting people into an organization can be risky (although Malachi Martin says that the Jesuits have certainly done it in the past). Instead, I am going to suggest that not only Adventism, but all of Protestantism, will be challenged with an *idea*.

When I see a Jesuit-authored book that deals with an end-time issue, I do my best to read it. In the research stacks at my Catholic alma mater, I found such a book.²⁰⁸ Though out of print, it was so fascinating that I searched the country until, in New York, I found a copy for my personal library. Its authors were European Jesuits, one of whom was so famous that, in theological circles, his was a household name: Karl Rahner. It is entitled *Unity of the Churches, an Actual Possibility*, and it contains a plan to bring Protestant churches back under the umbrella of Rome. The details are worth a moment of your time.

The eight “theses” of the book, when summarized, really come down to a multi-step plan.

First, Rahner recognized that many Protestants may be plenty skeptical about reuniting with Rome. For that reason, a strategy has to be employed to overcome resistance, and Rahner's plan is shrewd. Before taking the idea public, quietly court the thought leaders in the churches you wish to influence. “On the basis of their theological expertise,” Rahner declares, these church leaders “can decide in favor of church unity.”²⁰⁹ Notice the plan: the decision to unify will be made privately, by a few leaders.

²⁰⁸ Heinrich Fries, Karl Rahner, *Einigung der Kirchen — reale Möglichkeit* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany: Verlag Herder, 1983).

²⁰⁹ Heinrich Fries and Karl Rahner, *Unity of the Churches, An Actual Possibility*, trans. by Ruth C. L. Gritsch and Eric W. Gritsch (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 54.

Thereafter, he expects that they will work politically to sell the idea to their own people—using, of course, the terms and ideas they know their church population will be most comfortable with. No one can speak the language of a church better than an insider. Gently at first, but persistently, they can keep the idea before the membership—in meetings, in publications, in subtle shifts of terminology and emphasis. In today’s manipulative world, such a change is called a “paradigm shift.”

Rahner’s plan even has a bit of political intrigue. Once thought leaders in a given church decided to go for union, they would do their political homework carefully. As Rahner puts it, they can work with “zeal among the church members,”²¹⁰ making “sure” of the “support of their members” before bringing the matter to a vote.²¹¹

Secondly, Rahner believed that change can be accomplished much more easily today than even a few years ago. He was convinced that Protestants are, to use his term, so “liberal” that they are unconcerned about doctrine so long as a few familiar Christian ideas are present.²¹² Further, “the average congregation in the Protestant churches in fact usually practices the kind of obedience to their church leaders that is customary in the Roman Catholic church. Therefore one should not overestimate the danger of a rebellion...”²¹³

Translation? If their thought leaders could be won over, chances are that most average Protestants would rather blindly follow. On another occasion, Rahner said that Protestant laity are “passive,” and “therefore can be expected to follow their leaders into union with Rome.”²¹⁴

Third, as the idea of unification gained momentum

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ George Anderson, James Crumley, eds., *Promoting Unity: Themes in Lutheran-Catholic Dialogue* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Press, 1989), pp. 53, 54.

²¹² *Unity of the Churches*, p. 54.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

²¹⁴ *Promoting Unity*, pp. 53, 54.

among Christian faiths, an ecumenical union of churches would be formed. This might of itself spook some Protestants, so the plan has a clever way of neutralizing concern. *Individual denominations* would remain. Church organizations would stay intact; you would still seem to have all the denominations you had before. But in "Thesis IVA" of the book, it is clear that everyone will be expected to acknowledge papal leadership. "All partner churches acknowledge the meaning and right of the Petrine service of the Roman pope to be the concrete guarantor of the unity of the Church..."²¹⁵

In other words, *all these apparently independent denominations would accept the Pope as "guarantor" of church unity.*

To accelerate this ecumenical process, the book suggests lots of interchange between the churches. Pastors from the different denominations would exchange pulpits; a Baptist minister might preach in a Presbyterian church one Sunday, while his Presbyterian colleague would be speaking to the Methodists. Should the plan ever gain a foothold in Adventism, one might expect to see ministers of other denominations frequent Adventist pulpits.

The technique of pulpit exchanges is well designed to promote ecumenism. Expose people to other faiths, and barriers will melt. The cleric from another church who occupied the pulpit that Sunday morning is suddenly a real, flesh-and-blood human being with a rollicking sense of humor who has coffee with you in the social hall after the service; a little of this, and people inevitably begin to ask a question: *just how important is doctrine, anyway?* Why not just unite on the idea that we all love Jesus?

And that just might be the bait that could catch some Adventists. Love is an attractive word. It is the very substance of the Gospel: "for God so loved the world..."

²¹⁵ *Unity of the Churches*, p. 59.

But love, like many human words, is fragile. It can be distorted to cover some astonishing human rationalizations. In my early years of general law practice, when I did a fair bit of domestic relations trial work, I sometimes saw families broken up (and children hurt) because of a father's new "love."

In a theological setting, the term is almost unassailable. Use it cleverly, and you end the argument: the other person doesn't have "love." Because of that, most Christians forget that the ultimate verbalization of love is the Ten Commandments. The first four are the way you show love to God; the last six are love expressed to fellow men.

And the Ten Commandments just happen to be doctrinal! One of them, the Fourth Commandment, will be the doctrinal issue at the end of time that shows whether we really love God more than the ability to buy or sell.

Yet the plan to reunite Christianity, formulated by two Jesuits with jewel-like precision, carries a concealed algorithm that even some Adventists may not recognize. It presents itself as a question: *why let "doctrinal" issues separate us from other Christians?*

All of which leads to another step in Rahner's proposal: abolish doctrine as a source of controversy. In his plan, no member church in this union would be allowed to reject the dogma of another member church. Everything would have to be on the table, rejected by no one.

Notice two significant features of the Jesuit plan:

1. It assumes that most Protestants are now so "liberal" that they will follow their thought leaders into the new union.
2. Those same leaders will do their political homework well, preparing carefully and getting a majority on their side.

The plan coincides very well with the objectives of

Vatican II. In the *Post Conciliar Documents* of Vatican II, page 515, one finds the following goal: “When the obstacles hindering ecclesiastical communion have been surmounted, the unity of all Christians may at last be restored, *celebrating one eucharistic mystery.*”

I have italicized the last four words because they reveal how deeply Protestantism is supposed to rejoin Rome. The very heart of Catholic worship is the eucharist. Rome envisions “all Christians” once again participating in the sacrifice of the mass.

Why from a Protestant perspective is the Roman Catholic mass such a problem? Because it puts a human priest in “control” of Christ. When the priest elevates the host, he is “sacrificing” Christ afresh—a symbolic error that cost Moses translation. Thus, any relaxation in the distinction between Protestant and Catholic communion services contains within it the seeds for the destruction of Protestantism.

How would one sense that a movement like this is quietly afoot in a Protestant church? One hint might be subtle changes in that church’s communion service, with Catholic terms or communion techniques mysteriously showing up.

Convert the thought leaders of Protestantism. Expect to find a liberal and submissive laity. Form an ecumenical union in which pastors exchange pulpits. Be accepting of every other church’s doctrine. And acknowledge the Pope as the guarantor of unity. That, in brief summary, is the plan.

Now compare all this with *Testimonies to Ministers*, page 474, as Ellen White describes a plan to neutralize Adventism:

“We must exert all our wisdom and subtlety to deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath....Through those that have a form of godliness but know not the power, we can gain many who would otherwise do us great harm...*Those of this class who are apt and intelligent will*

serve as decoys to draw others into our snares. I will have upon the ground, as my agents, men holding false doctrines mingled with just enough truth to deceive souls.”

Notice the target group: those who are “*apt and intelligent*.” Why choose them? Because they are thought leaders, and they are already inside the church, where they have credibility. “Many will not fear their influence, because they profess the same faith.”

The result? “We will thus lead them to conclude that the requirements of Christ are *less strict than they once believed*, and that by conformity to the world they would exert a greater influence with worldlings. Thus they will separate from Christ....and *ere long they will be ready to ridicule their former zeal and devotion*.”

That is a plan to destroy Adventism. Will it work? The dreadful answer is that *it will come close!* Mrs. White bluntly warns that “The church may appear as about to fall.”

But she adds a promise: “it does *not* fall. It *remains*, while the sinners in Zion will be sifted out....This is a terrible ordeal, but nevertheless it *must take place*.”²¹⁶

Notice that in the shaking, the righteous are not the ones who finally leave, and hence any call to leave Adventism for something “purer” is in error. The church “does *not* fall.” Why? Because it is still God’s church, and within it there are still believers committed to the Advent message! “The remnant that purify their souls by obeying the truth *gather strength* from the trying process, *exhibiting the beauty of holiness amid the surrounding apostasy*.”²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Ellen G. White letter to G. I. Butler and S. N. Haskell. December 8, 1886; see *The Upward Look* (Washington: Review and Herald Pub. Assn., 1982), p. 356. (Italics supplied.)

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

VI

What does one do when the storm breaks? Should individual Adventists feel concerned enough to act? And if so, how?

On July 25, 1904, in the depths of the Kellogg crisis, Ellen White spent the pre-dawn hours in extraordinary pain. "I felt that my strength was leaving me," she said. "I had great suffering through my whole body...Every nerve and sinew was in pain." Momentarily she thought of waking up the family, and then decided against it. "They can not give me relief," she said aloud, and then she prayed for help. Relief came, and along with it came a message for Adventism, that tells what to do when truth is in danger. It can be found in *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, beginning at page 5, and it should be read by every Adventist.

She begins with the mighty wake-up call found in Isaiah 58. "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." And then she gives some startlingly frank advice on what to do with wrongdoing that threatens the truths of Adventism.

"In his work on this earth, Christ saw how, by a disregard of the injunctions of God in regard to righteousness and true doctrines, *evil would be made almost indistinguishable from good*. At times He looked upon the deceiving power of Satan, and saw that the wrongdoing of evil workers *must be met*....shall we keep silence for fear of hurting their feelings?....Is it right for those connected with such ones to treat them as if there were perfect harmony with them, making no difference between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not? Though they be ministers or medical missionaries, they have dishonored Christ before the forces of the loyal and the disloyal. Open rebuke is necessary, to prevent others from being ensnared." (Italics supplied.)

From a lady who counseled tact and compassion, who urged people to be ready to die for someone before

going to correct them, the language seems uncharacteristically strong. But evidently there will come a time when love will have to be expressed in a strangely frank way, when the future of the church appears to hang in the balance, and people will simply have to choose sides. “There is to be a constant conflict between good and evil,” she said. “If this matter were rightly understood and closely guarded, God’s servants would feel a continual burden of responsibility *to counterwork* the efforts of men who...are enchanted by the delusive allurements of Satan.”²¹⁸

In the midst of the alpha, with institutions being perverted and young people exposed to influences that would wring heart-breaking letters from their parents to Ellen White, she wrote advice that may apply with equal force to the omega. From her tone, one senses that there comes a time when one has to stand up, let the consequences be what they may.

“The enemy’s agents are working unceasingly to prevail against the truth,” she cried out. “Where are the faithful guardians of the Lord’s flocks? *Where are His watchmen?* Are they standing on the high tower, giving the danger signal, or are they allowing the peril to pass unheeded?”²¹⁹

“Will the men in our institutions keep silent allowing insidious fallacies to be promulgated, to the ruin of souls? The sentiments of the enemy are being scattered everywhere. Seeds of discord, of unbelief, of infidelity, are being sown broadcast. *Shall our medical missionaries raise no barrier against this evil?*

“Angels of God that excel in strength, are *waiting for us to call them to our aid*, that our faith may not be eclipsed by the fierceness of the conflict....

“*My message to you is this: No longer consent to listen without protest to the perversion of truth.*”²²⁰

²¹⁸ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, p. 11. (Italics supplied.)

²¹⁹ *Ibid.* (Italics supplied.)

²²⁰ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 2, Pp. 13-15. (Emphases supplied.)

What, then, should Adventists do when they feel concern over the welfare of the church they love?

The most basic rule of all is to stay with the church. "Enfeebled and defective, needing constantly to be warned and counseled, the church is nevertheless the object of Christ's supreme regard." *Testimonies for the Church*, Volume 7, p. 16. Even Dr. Kellogg, long after his break with the church, advised a former student to stay with the denomination. It was some of the best advice Kellogg ever gave.

Once, while flying over Southern California, I encountered severe turbulence from winds that had shifted unexpectedly. As I made the landing approach, the airplane handled like a rodeo bronco. I adjusted power, lowered the landing gear, nervously watched the vertical speed indicator as gusts alternately shot us skyward and then let us drop. I used every trick from my years of flying to maintain control. And I prayed. But there was one thing I *didn't* do: I didn't open the door and get out.

Rough as the ride was, the airplane was the only place in the sky I cared to be. And so it should be with the church.

We began this book with a question I want to repeat. Where else in all the world can you find an organized denomination that keeps the Sabbath, has a judgment hour message, proclaims the law, expects the Advent, has received the gift of prophecy—and, as a bonus, has a health message good for over six extra years of life expectancy?

Stay with the church. D. M. Canright gave that advice from his deathbed, under circumstances that were pitiful. He had left Adventism, dreaming of becoming a great man, but he had not even been able to hold a meaningful job. "I know I am dying, a lost man," he sadly admitted to his brother, and as one thinks about it, there is a double tragedy here. Not only did he lose eternal life, but he missed the joy of using his remarkable talents in a church that grew, during his apostasy, seven-fold.

Secondly, we should defend truth only in ways that Christ can approve. “Of all people in the world, reformers should be the most unselfish, the most kind, the most courteous. In their lives should be seen the true goodness of unselfish deeds. The worker who manifests a lack of courtesy, who shows impatience at the ignorance or waywardness of others, who speaks hastily or acts thoughtlessly, may close the door to hearts so that he can never reach them.” *Gospel Workers*, p. 507. I know from experience that it is easy, while trying to defend the truth, to say things in a way we later regret.

Thirdly, we should place our concerns before responsible church leadership in a kind and Christlike way. If we fail to speak, how can they know what is on our minds?

Finally, there may be times when we feel despair, when principle is at stake and our concerns seem swept away in the storm. At that moment we have the most powerful option of all: intercessory prayer.

In Daniel 9, we find the aged prophet reviewing the writings of Jeremiah and realizing that a time prophecy had run its course. It was time for God’s people to go home. Just as it is doing now, history began cooperating with prophecy. The Babylonians were replaced by the Persians, who would be willing to let Israel rebuild the temple to the one unseen God. Prophecy was ready. The Persians were ready. But God’s people were not; life had become easy in Babylon, and few wanted to leave.

As he surveyed his failing church, Daniel did the one thing open to him: he engaged in intercessory prayer. *And instead of being self-righteous, he included himself with his sinning church!* It is worth noting that only after that Christlike intercession did he finally receive from Gabriel the key that unlocked the 2,300 year prophecy.

Intercessory prayer. Ezekiel 9 describes God’s faithful believers as engaging in this at a time of apostasy and

danger. And this is what makes the difference between those who are sealed and those who are not.

Stay with the church. Let the brethren know, in a persuasive, Christlike way, when you feel concern. Pray for the church you love. And continue to support it—with your presence, your time, and your means.

VII

How might one recognize the onset of problems that deserve that sort of courage and conviction? The lessons from the alpha bring a few ideas to mind. As you face the future in the church you love, from time to time ask yourself some defining questions.

Are we still clear on the Advent message? What do we hear on Sabbath mornings? Is the message like a clear trumpet-tone, reminding us that Jesus is coming and that it is time to make ready a people for His arrival?

Is the law of God still a part of our Gospel? Or are we being challenged by the ultimate oxymoron: that the law—which will distinguish us from the whole world at the end—can't be kept?

Do we still have a sense of reverence when we enter church to worship God? "I have been shown the order, the perfect order, of heaven," Ellen White wrote in *Testimonies*, Volume 1, page 146, "and I have been enraptured as I listened to the perfect music there...It is melody, heavenly, divine, while from every countenance beams the image of Jesus, shining with glory unspeakable." Are we forming habits incompatible with that environment?

Is the Spirit of Prophecy still believed—and preached? Ellen White has been accused of saying that her writings should *never* be used in the pulpit. I have been informed that no such statement is known to exist.

And when doctrinal questions arise, is the Spirit of Prophecy accepted as an authority source, or do some people invent reasons to avoid it?

Are we still clear on 1844, the sanctuary, and the investigative judgment, and do we hear these truths preached in sermons that are filled with Scripture and the Holy Spirit's power?

What is the direction of our conferences, our campuses, our institutions? Does one sense a clarity of message, or is there a subtle but inexorable drift toward something else? Is the work healthy? Or are there the tell-tale signs of stress: shrinking churches, closing schools, retreat in areas where we once advanced?

Who are our "thought leaders," and what are they saying?

And what about our publications? Ellen White predicted "books of a new order?" Is there any sign of that? Is the stream of Adventist literature still clear about our truths?

Are our institutions still decisively *Adventist*, with an identity that is unmistakable?

Do your children come home from academy or college clear in their convictions and literate in the Scriptures?

If you are a student, what do you hear in your classrooms—particularly in religion classes?

Finally, ask yourself some questions.

Do you spend as much time in the Word as you do in front of the television?

Do you really practice the truths that make Adventists so unique, or—like the brethren of Kellogg's day—do you sometimes allow yourself the luxury of compromise, thinking that a mistake may not be so bad if we keep it "small?"

Do you support the work of God with your time, energy, and means? Or is it easy to allow one's self luxuries that may take resources badly needed to give the Advent message?

Do you really want Jesus to come? And are you really ready to meet Him?

VIII

“Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning...the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.” Ezekiel 3:17, 18.

“To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test.”²²¹

²²¹ *Testimonies*, vol. 5, p. 136.

Epilogue

“Like a Desolating Cyclone”

I

The year was 1914. Across the city of Battle Creek, dusty-bright in the early summer sun, only memories reminded of what had been—and of what *might* have been. On the corner of Washington and Main there was little indication that the Review and Herald Publishing Company had ever stood there, or that once this had been the location for the General Conference. Battle Creek College, reopened with such high hopes by Dr. Kellogg, was closed, a dismal failure. Adventists were comparatively few now, and old-timers could recall the forest of “For Sale” signs that had appeared as the colony broke up. “The world will know the reason,” Ellen White had once warned, and now D. M. Canright published a new edition of his book *Seventh-day Adventism Renounced*—and unwittingly ensured the fulfillment of her prediction.

“Battle Creek, Michigan, furnishes a good illustration of the failure of Adventism after a fair trial....When I withdrew in 1887, there were nearly two thousand Sabbathkeepers here, all united. Often I preached in the great tabernacle when every seat, below and in the gallery, was full. In the college I taught one class of

about two hundred, all young men and women preparing to work either as ministers or Bible readers. Now, 1914, the college is closed and lost to the cause; the sanitarium has revolted from the denomination, and nearly all the management, doctors, nurses and helpers are Sunday keepers; the publishing houses were burned down and the remnant moved away; the church has dwindled down to about four or five hundred; the tabernacle is largely empty and an elephant on their hands...Large numbers have backslidden, lost faith in everything, and attend nowhere. *It has been like a desolating cyclone.*"²²²

Fourteen years had passed since that bright January morning at the dawn of a new century, when the world stood ready and the Advent message had a chance to go like sunlight. Now the day was over, its last shadows about to be drawn tight by a 19-year-old Serbian nationalist with a pistol. In the Bosnian town of Sarajevo, a chauffeur made a wrong turn and drove the open limousine down a crowded street. Behind him, sheltered by a parasol from the intense summer sun, sat a royal couple whose life had been a classic love story and for whom this day was their fourteenth anniversary. For a moment the chauffeur hesitated, then began to turn the car around, and as he did so, two shots rang out. Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife slumped in the seat, and the long day of Adventism's opportunity was over.

The first shots of World War I had been fired. From now on, the church would have to work in a world descending into madness.

II

Once, just a dozen years before, the brethren had faced a decision. Should they follow the Spirit of Prophecy explicitly, or mend a few fences with what seemed like a harmless compromise?

²²² Canright, *Seventh-Day Adventism Renounced*, p. 411. (Italics supplied.)

It had seemed so unimportant back in 1902, but so much had changed. *So many lights had gone out.* J. H. Kellogg, leader of the medical work, whose medical school expenses had been partly paid by James and Ellen White; Albion Ballenger, who had decided to redo the sanctuary truth using theological treatises rather than the Spirit of Prophecy; Elders A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner, who had traveled and preached with Ellen White; Elder George Tenney, editor, minister, missionary; Elder L. McCoy, chaplain of the Battle Creek Sanitarium—to which were added, Canright hastily pointed out, "many persons in important positions [such] as business managers, college professors, doctors, etc. *All these are now out of the church, and all their influence is against the body.*"²²³

The loss had been terrible; and now, like the coal smoke from the Review and Herald fire, it left a haunting question that lingered over the church: How could such a thing happen? What could produce such a massive apostasy among the denomination's brightest minds?

The answer was disarmingly simple, and ironically it was one the church had had all along. In the still peaceful days of 1898, Ellen White had clearly warned what could happen. "There never will be a time in the history of the church when God's worker can fold his hands and be at ease, saying, 'All is peace and safety'....Everything may move forward amid apparent prosperity; but Satan is wide awake, and is studying and counseling with his evil angels another mode of attack where he can be successful. The contest will wax more and more fierce on the part of Satan....*Mind will be arrayed against mind, plans against plans, principles of heavenly origin against principles of Satan. Truth in its varied phases will be in conflict with error in its ever-varying, increasing forms, and which, if possible, will deceive the very elect.*"²²⁴

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 412. (Italics supplied.)

²²⁴ *Special Testimonies*, Series A, No. 11, p. 5. (Italics supplied.)

There, if one cared to think about it, was the whole history of the crisis, presented five years before Kellogg's book was ever published. Satan himself had directed this attack; the battle had been fought on a supernatural level, in which, without supernatural help, even the brightest minds would be scattered like leaves before an autumn wind. Kellogg, Jones, Waggoner, McCoy—all had gone out to face the enemy after first deciding in some way to substitute their own judgment for the warnings of God's messenger, and they had thus stripped themselves of the only defense that meant anything. Somewhere in the course of events they had become dead-sure that they were right, that it was time to escape from a "dead body of dead prophecies," and now as they scattered from Adventism they did so with pious prayers for God's blessing on their departure.

And across the valley of time echoed the words of Ellen White given back in 1903, words spoken before it was too late for most of them: "Satan has his allies in men. And *evil angels in human form will appear to men*, and present before them such glowing representations of what they will be able to do if they will only heed their suggestions, that often they change their penitence for defiance....Sin has darkened the reasoning powers, and hell is triumphing. O, will not men cease to trust in human beings?"²²⁵

Evil angels in human form. There was no hope of surviving such a challenge in human strength. Humanity had no answer for the logic of an angel's mind, where memories of paradise twisted grotesquely into a deception so powerful that it had ruined one-third of heaven's angels. No amount of education or experience equipped a man to face such a trap, and John Kellogg, for one, had walked straight into it while bells rang and lights flashed from the pages of Ellen White's messages to him.

²²⁵ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 7, pp. 21, 21. (Italics supplied.)

To Kellogg she addressed the warning that he was himself being "hypnotized" by Satanic forces, something he derided as absurd. In the face of such warnings he plunged ahead, accompanied by a growing flock of supporters, whose minds were quieted by the doctor's assurances that Ellen White's testimonies were not always trustworthy. Thus they had finally arrived at a tragic fulfillment of yet another of her predictions: "If permitted, evil angels will work the minds of men *until they have no mind or will of their own*.... Thus it will be with physicians or ministers who continue to bind up with the one who has had light, who has had warnings, but who has not heeded them."²²⁶

Dr. Kellogg's story ends with a sad question mark. Despite the stress of the alpha, it seems that Ellen White never lost her personal regard for him. Years later an Adventist physician recalled how she said to him, "Dr. Kellogg may be lost. I hope he is not. But if he is lost, let him go with your hand on his shoulder." Some time thereafter, the doctor chanced to see Kellogg in the dining room of an Adventist hospital. Remembering Mrs. White's request, he walked over to the aging physician, put his hand on his shoulder, and said, "Dr. Kellogg, won't you come with us?" Kellogg remained thoughtful and silent for a long moment, and then is said to have replied, "Perhaps I am not as far from you as you think."

Yet other accounts reveal a sadder epilogue. Not long ago I received a telephone call from a retired Adventist physician who had trained under Dr. Miller in China, and he related a story he had gotten personally from Miller.

Miller had once been a student of Kellogg's. On a visit to the States, he was still smarting from some disagreement with the brethren, and he chanced to meet his old professor.

"Dr. Miller," Kellogg said, "I hear you've had a little

²²⁶ *Special Testimonies*, Series B, No. 6, pp. 42, 43. (Italics supplied.)

spanking from the brethren. Let me give you some advice. Just take it; don't rebel; and whatever you do, never leave the church. I couldn't go back now if they asked me, but don't you ever leave. And don't give up on the Spirit of Prophecy."

The thought of men like Dr. Kellogg leaving the church, going out into a night where there would be no morning, is tragic. It kept Mrs. White up night after night, pacing the floor and begging God for some way to bring them back. For they were facing a loss that was compound. Not only would they risk their souls, they would lose the best adventure this world could offer: being part of God's last organized work on this earth.

The church would survive—would, in fact, grow rapidly despite their defections. But they would miss the joy of being part of that. And thus they risked not only heaven, but fulfillment here as well.

III

The same sad lesson can be seen in the life of Albion Ballenger. One night during an evangelistic meeting in London he had attempted to present the subject of the sanctuary. Terribly discouraged with the way he had preached it, he vowed that he would "never preach it again until I know what I am preaching." And then he had made a fatal mistake. "I am not going to get it from our books," he declared. "If our brethren could obtain it from the original sources, why can't I?"

Elder Ballenger was making the same mistake already made by Dr. Kellogg: the assumption that nothing was really involved here except human reasoning, in which one person's research ought to be as good as another's. To prove his point (perhaps to himself), he refused to use denominational materials. "I will go to the books or commentaries and all these various sources," he declared, and so saying he promptly walked straight off into darkness. For the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary was not to be found in outside "books or

commentaries"—not to be found anywhere except from the same Source as was sought by that circle of praying men and women who had studied through the cold autumn nights of 1844, and in whose midst had been the same special messenger who now warned Ballenger to turn around before it was too late.

He chose to ignore that plea, and not surprisingly ended up with what Ellen White called "piles" of misinterpreted texts, gathered and gleaned from the "books and commentaries" of men who hadn't the foggiest idea of the heavenly sanctuary. Like Kellogg, he left the Adventist faith ("cast out for the cross of Christ," he complained), and in Riverside, California—just a few miles from Adventism's vital new medical school—he spent his last few years publishing attacks on Adventist truth.²²⁷

Like a desolating cyclone. Canright had meant those words for God's church, but how clearly they described the lives of those who left it. A whole galaxy of Adventist lights had gone out, each in its own way, each bound to the rest by the common tragedy of rejecting God's messenger at a time when Satanic techniques were being used against the human mind. The church and the world were entering a new era. Now the mistake of stepping outside God's special protection would take on deeper and deeper risks.

IV

Nineteen Fourteen. God's people have lived for nearly fifteen years in the sunlight of earth's last summer day. Now the sky darkens with the first of winter's storms. Across the vulnerable plains of Belgium comes the rumble of heavy artillery being moved, a sweeping cloud of dust, an endless line of gray uniforms that identifies General Karl von Bülow's Second Army. In Berlin,

²²⁷ For early information on Ballenger see Document File 178, E. E. Andross, "Bible Study No. II," July 13, 1911, pp. 13, 14.

exuberant troops parade for the last time; a young woman in a frilly white blouse breaks into their ranks, locks arms with a soldier, and marches with them. A few steps behind, a well-dressed businessman does the same, carrying a soldier's gun—smiling faces headed sightlessly into the terrible midnight of the Marne and Verdun, into a nightmare never before seen except by a little lady who, years earlier, had pleaded with her church for action before it was too late.

“Soon there will be death and destruction, increasing crime, and cruel, evil working against the rich who have exalted themselves against the poor. Those who are without God's special protection will find no safety in any place or position....Let the means and the workers be scattered.”²²⁸

Once there was sunlight, a golden moment filled with opportunity for the people of God, lost because a skillful enemy succeeded in diverting their attention from the only message they really had to give. And out of that tragedy comes a question that still lingers over Adventism: Will we let it happen again?

²²⁸ *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 50. (Italics supplied.)

“It is conformity to the world that is causing our people to lose their bearings. The perversion of right principles has not been brought about suddenly. The angel of the Lord presented this matter to me in symbols. It seemed as if a thief were stealthily moving closer and still closer, gradually but surely stealing away the identity of God’s work by leading our brethren to conform to worldly policies....”

“The Lord expects us to make most diligent efforts to free ourselves of the worldly spirit that has come in among us...The Lord calls for a reformation. In every place where believers have adopted worldly principles, He desires a voice of warning to be raised.”

An early morning talk before the Pacific Union Medical Missionary Counsel at St. Helena, California, July 7, 1902.

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